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St. Dominic's Monterey.

S^t. THOMAS VILLANOVA.

The Saints and Servants of God.

THE LIVES

OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA,

Ex libris
Joannis Shanahan

ARCHBISHOP OF VALENTIA,

AND AUGUSTINIAN FRIAR;

AND OF

ST. FRANCIS SOLANO,

APOSTLE OF PERU,

OF THE ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS.

"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*

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M. D. CCC. XLVII.

TO

THE REGULAR CLERGY

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND,

THE CHILDREN

OF ST. BENEDICT AND ST. BERNARD,

ST. DOMINICK AND ST. FRANCIS,

AND THE SONS

OF THE HOLY IGNATIUS,

THE GREAT MASTER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE,

AND THE NURSING-FATHER OF SAINTS AND MARTYRS,

WHO,

IN THE STRAITNESS AND NEGLECT

OF THEIR UNHONOURED CLOISTERS,

OR THE CHEERLESS SOLITUDE

OF THEIR HIRED LODGING,

HAVE JOYFULLY EMBRACED THE POVERTY OF JESUS,

AND EARNED BY LOVING ZEAL

THE CROWN OF MARTYRDOM,

AND WHO,

THROUGH SCENES OF AWFUL SACRILEGE,

AND TIMES OF BITTER PERSECUTION,

THROUGH THE LONG AND WEARY VISITATION

OF ACTIVE MALICE OR OF COLD CONTEMPT,

HAVE PERPETUATED,

AMONGST THEIR UNWORTHY COUNTRYMEN,

THE BLESSED LINEAGE

OF THEIR HOLY FOUNDERS.

St. Wilfrid's,
Feast of St. Bernard,
M. D. CCC. XLVII.

dc.4751

PREFACE.

Of the two lives which this volume contains, that of S. Thomas of Villanova is by Father Claude Maimbourg, an Augustinian, published at Paris in 1659; and that of S. Francis Solano by Father Francis Courtot, a Franciscan, and Doctor in Theology of the Faculty of Paris. The translations of this volume—and the same remark will apply to the whole series—are by no means literally faithful. This did not seem a matter of any consequence in biography; the reader wishes to have the life of the Saint, without attaching, except in some rare instances, any value to the style or manner of the biographer; but it did seem important to have the narrative as fluent, idiomatic, and natural as a translation can be, and to this the mere literal fidelity of translation has been sacrificed. In promising volumes of four hundred pages, our readers will understand that we could not pledge ourselves to have each volume

neither more nor less than that length, but that the average should be four hundred pages. Thus the present volume falls considerably short of that, whereas the first volume was twenty-two pages more, and the two next volumes will more than compensate for the deficiency of this; but the average will be kept to as far as the different length of the Lives will allow. Dr. Wiseman's Introduction on the Lives of the Modern Saints will be given with the second and concluding volume of S. Philip Neri, which, it is hoped, will be published before the close of the present year. The third volume, containing the Lives of S. Rose of Lima, B. Colomba of Rieti, and S. Juliana Falconieri, will be published on the 25th of October.

F. W. Faber.

St. Wilfrid's,
Feast of St. Bernard, 1847.

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THE LIFE

OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

THE LIFE

OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE BIRTH OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, AND THE INCLINATION TO ASSIST THE POOR WHICH HE DISPLAYED IN HIS EARLY YOUTH.

St. Thomas of Villanova was born in Spain, in the year of grace 1488. His birth-place was a village called Fluentplan, near Villanova, a town of some note in the district of Montiel and diocese of Toledo. The nobility of his parents sprung from the exercise of virtue and sanctity of life, rather than from a long descent. They were simple people of the middle class; and their ancestors, who from time immemorial had professed the Catholic Faith, had bequeathed a fair name to their family, but had not cared to leave behind them any extraordinary store of wealth. But for all this they were well to do in the world. They had enough to support their condition honestly, and they contented themselves with what our Lord had given them.

His father was called Alphonse Thomas Garcie. He was a pious man, and of spotless morals. As he possessed good feeling, and was easy and affable, many men resorted to him for advice in their difficulties; but chiefly the poor villagers, to whom he was in the habit of lending grain for seed or for their support until harvest-time, when they punctually repaid what they had borrowed.

His mother's name was Lucie Martines. She was very modest and retiring, and carried engraved upon her face the image of the devotion which breathed through her heart. She assisted regularly at the Divine Office, frequented the Sacraments, and never neglected her hours of mental prayer. But of all the religious exercises, to which she devoted herself with so much careful attention, she was most remarkable for charity towards the poor. This she practised with so much love and tenderness, that our Saint in after years, looking back with admiration to his mother's virtues, was wont to disclose to his more intimate friends, that God, in consideration of her compassion towards the indigent, had bestowed upon him graces and favours so remarkable as to amount almost to a miracle. And thus Juan Magnanatones, a brother of his order, who was bishop of Segovia, used to say of him, that he never spoke of his mother's piety without expressing the same sentiments towards her that S. Augustin entertained towards his mother, S. Monica, and has published in his Confessions, where he sets forth his obligations to her goodness.

Such was the mother of S. Thomas. From

her our Saint appeared to inherit the gift of prayer, piety, and compassion towards the poor, and to add to them the judgment and probity of his father. Our Lord vouchsafed to unite in the son the virtues of both parents, and rendered him in a short time a perfect and accomplished model of them all.

St. Augustin, speaking of the care which his mother took to rear him in the love and fear of God, remarks amongst other things, that she often had the holy name of Jesus on her tongue, in order that he might learn to pronounce it betimes, and to invoke it in his little wants with the lisping accents of infancy. The result of this holy diligence was, that the sacred Name became so deeply imprinted in his heart, that in after-years when his judgment had been clouded by Manichean errors, he could not relish the lectures of heathen philosophers and orators, because they did not contain the name of Jesus, which he afterwards found so frequently in the Epistles of S. Paul; and thus his entire conversion happily ensued. In the same way the mother of our S. Thomas knew of what importance it was in the education of the young, to give them good principles, and early to impress them with all that they ought to retain; and, therefore, to the first sentiments of piety with which she inspired her son, she endeavoured to join a tender devotion to the most holy Name of Jesus, and to that of the Blessed Virgin, feeding his heart with respect and love towards the Queen of heaven, at the same time that she nourished his body with its

first food; and so happy were the effects, that it was remarked of all the graces which he received from God through the intercession of Mary, the sovereign dispenser of favours, that the most distinguished were conferred upon him on some one of her festivals. For example, he took the habit of religion on the day of our Lady's Presentation, he received the episcopal dignity on her glorious Assumption, and he quitted this world on the feast of her Nativity.

His inclination to frequent churches and spend as much time in them as he was able, may also be ascribed to the good example of his mother. Like another Samuel, whom God had chosen to dwell in His presence, he began as soon as he could walk, to offer his first steps and first words in the temple, where he used to say his prayers and to serve mass with a behaviour quite unlike a child. It was his delight to sweep the church, and to deck the altars, and to find employment of this sacred kind; and the persons in charge of the church used to set the young Saint to work, as much to satisfy his requests, as for the sake of gaining his services. His father and mother, who sought only the glory of God in their son, were over-joyed at these indications of an inclination towards the priesthood or a religious life; and they sent him to school at the age of seven, where he learnt to read and write, and went through the other ordinary branches of education. Before he had been long at school, he displayed tokens of the vivacity of his spirit, which engaged the attention of his master. The solidity

of his judgment drew forth particular admiration; for he possessed sound sense, and conducted himself with so grave a demeanour, that he kept his companions to their duties by his mere presence. He never accosted any who were not distinguished for modesty, and when he found none in his own humour, he used to go straight home or to the church, and all his pleasure out of school was found in one or the other.

The love of our Saint towards the poor was displayed very early, and from his little alms it was easy to judge how much he would afterwards do to solace their afflictions. Instead of eating his breakfast, he generally gave it to the poor whom he met on his way to school; and not content with taking the food from his own mouth for their support, he often pulled off his clothes and gave them to poor children, as a protection against cold and nakedness. His mother, so far from reproving him on these occasions, praised God within herself, and used to pray that He who had inspired these first movements of piety and compassion towards His members, would bless her son the more for them, and would deign to bring him to perfection, which she only desired for His glory.

As he was coming from school one day, when he was about eight years old, he overtook a poor peasant who seemed very sad, and was afraid to enter the house, because he had not brought back all the corn which our Saint's father had lent him the previous year. The child advanced with a gay and open countenance, and demanded

the reason of his sadness. The villager knew him, and disclosed all his grief; the year had been a very bad one, and he was consequently quite unable to repay all at once the corn he had borrowed last seed-time, and he feared that what he had with him would not be accepted as an instalment, and that he should henceforth forfeit the benefits which he had hitherto enjoyed. This recital made a deep impression on the child's heart. "Come," he exclaimed to the poor man; "come at once and let me see the truth of what you say; for if you really have so scanty a supply of grain, and if you are not able to return what you have borrowed of my father, be sure that God will find a remedy for your misfortune." So they went together, and he found that the poor man's story was evidently true. The child then retraced his steps, and throwing himself at his father's feet, he described the misery of the poor debtor who could not pay all that he owed, and even, in returning a portion of it, had left scarce any food for his destitute family; and he implored his father by the name of our Lord, to take what the poor man had brought, and to wait for the remainder until he could conveniently pay it. His father, overcome by so moving a petition, was unable to hear him out. He was filled with joy to hear his son express sentiments so good and generous. That very instant he went to the door, to find the poor peasant, and to offer him consolation; and he forthwith cancelled the debt, and promised to continue his assistance whenever the poor man stood in need of help.

CHAPTER II.

HE IS SENT TO STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALCALÁ, AND MAKES RAPID PROGRESS IN VIRTUE AND LEARNING.

At the age of twelve his father and mother sent him to study at the university of Alcala. They wished him to make advances in literature; for they gathered from the bright indications of goodness and talent which he had displayed, that he was destined for the service of our Lord, and that he would one day rise to eminence in the Church. The result answered their expectations. On quitting Villanova he knew nothing at all of the Latin language; and yet he had not been long at Alcala, before he made himself a perfect master of it. He passed with success through the Humanity classes. His progress in Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Theology, was quite surprising. But although the advance he made in all the sciences taught at the university, drew all eyes upon him, it was his humility above all the rest which elicited the the admiration both of masters and scholars. During the sixteen years which he spent at Alcala and Salamanca, learning himself and teaching others, he never uttered a single word to his own advantage or the prejudice of his neighbour. He never let fall one bitter or misplaced word, whoever might contradict him;

and while arguing in the schools, amidst the heats of debate, he preserved as much composure as when alone in his chamber. The humility which he preserved while surrounded with applauding friends, gained the love and esteem of all hearts, insomuch that respect for his virtue often procured him to be chosen referee in cases of great difficulty, where the cleverest of the university had failed of success, and his charity and inclination towards peace, found means to compose differences which were quite unknown to the wisdom of the flesh.

He was very pure and chaste, and Father James Montiel, his confessor, deposed publicly, that he had never permitted the precious lily of his chastity to wither, but had kept it pure and whole even to the tomb. To preserve this celestial virtue, which he knew to be the gift of God, he devoted himself to frequent prayer, as well as to meditation and other spiritual exercises, and he endeavoured to act up to the advice S. Jerome gave Rufinus, "To avoid idleness as the mother of vices." To this end he occupied all his time in reading, praying, studying, and conversing with his friends about what he had read or learnt; in order that the devil, finding him so engaged, might not be able to enter his soul, and to assail it and involve it in his snares. To this remedy the young Saint added the practice of another virtue equally calculated to guard him from an evil which he dreaded more than death itself. The mortification of his body was continual. He wore him-

self down with fasting and hair-cloth and the frequent use of the discipline, and subdued his flesh, as though he regarded it as an enemy, which he was resolved to render perfectly supple and obedient to his spirit.

While he was thus employed in labouring for his salvation, his father, who had done all he could by good works to secure his own, passed from this world to the other, leaving his property to his wife and son. As soon as the news reached S. Thomas, he set off for Villanova, that he might arrange his family affairs, and console his mother by his presence. In both objects he was equally successful. After having read his father's will, he told his mother with great simplicity, that he had no wish for his share of the property; that he willingly resigned it to her for her support, to enable her to live comfortably in her state of widowhood; and that, as for himself, his thoughts and desire were fixed upon heavenly riches, not on those of the earth, which he despised and renounced with all his heart, for the love of his Lord and a wish to imitate His example.

This noble conduct had so much effect upon his mother, that, though but seventeen years of age, he induced her to adopt his sentiments, persuading her to turn their house into an hospital for the poor, and to employ all her means in lodging, feeding, and entertaining them. Our Lord, who spoke to her by the voice of her son, rewarded her cheerful acquiescence to His wishes by bestowing on her some very remarkable fa-

vours and graces, having even sometimes miraculously multipled the provisions of the hospital, for the pilgrims and other poor people who resorted to her for relief. On account of her profuse and tender charity, she was honoured with the title of "Mother of the Poor."

Her son, who was truly the father of the poor, making them, while living, his heirs, returned to Alcala, where he made such progress both in virtue and knowledge, that his instructors in the university (especially a celebrated professor named John of Vergana) who knew his humility, proposed him to their scholars for imitation, as if he had been already a saint canonized by the Church.

At the early age of twenty-six, he lectured publicly in philosophy, and amongst the numerous auditors who were afterwards celebrated for their piety and doctrine, there was one of particular celebrity, named Dominic Soto, whom Spain reckons amongst the most illustrious of her theologians.

When these lectures were concluded, he was offered a vacant place in the college of S. Ildephonsus in Alcala. Those who had the right of presentation, wished to show their high sense of his merits, by presenting him, unsolicited, to a situation which was usually obtained by powerful interest. The doctors of Alcala had hoped by this obligation to keep him with them, and to make him one of the heads of their body. However, they were soon deprived of him, for the university of Salamanca, the first in Spain,

having heard of his virtue and extraordinary acquirements, invited him there to teach morality. He went, not so much for the emolument, as to satisfy their earnest wishes, and to show his feeling of the honour done him. His principal object was to execute the design he had formed of giving himself more entirely to God, as soon as he could honestly disengage himself from his studies. To prepare for the retreat from the world which he meditated, he gave himself more than ever to prayer, fasting, mortification of the senses, and assisting the necessitous and the miserable. He had an especial compassion for poor scholars, charitably giving them all he could spare to help them to continue their studies, employing for this object the profit of his labours, scarcely reserving for himself as much as was necessary for his subsistence.

CHAPTER III.

HE TAKES THE HABIT IN THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

Although our holy professor lived in the world as not belonging to it, and, to speak in the language of the apostle, used the world as not using it, knowing that the fashion of it passes away, he resolved to go out of it entirely, and to shelter himself from its waves and tempests in the secure and peaceful harbour of a religious life. Nevertheless, with his accustomed prudence and

caution, he determined not to be precipitate in so important an affair; but recommending it to God with many prayers and tears, he spared no pains to make himself acquainted with the spirit and the rules of several orders, that he might judge for which he was the best fitted. At length, after a long and careful examination, our Lord, who knows what is good for us better than we do ourselves, called him by a strong inspiration into the order of S. Augustine.

He said nothing to his friends respecting his intention, nor did he disclose it even to his mother, much as he loved and honoured her. He feared she might divert him from his purpose; and from the manner in which she wrote to him after his profession, it appears he was right in his conjecture. She entirely approved of his resolution to leave the world, and thanked God from the depths of her soul, that her beloved son was so entirely devoted to His service, but with a mother's fond affection she had set her heart upon his entering the monastery of Hucles of the order of S. Jerome, that she might sometimes have the consolation of seeing him, instead of his removing to a distance where she would be deprived of that pleasure.

In order then to prevent these, and other obstacles, which flesh and blood might have raised, from strangling his design in its birth, he went immediately to Father Francis of Para, superior of the Augustines of Salamanca, humbly requesting the habit. He was received at the age of thirty, on the day of the Presentation of

our Lady, having expressly chosen this day from a feeling of respect and tenderness towards the Blessed Virgin, and with an earnest hope that it might please God to bless the offering he made of himself, in consideration and by the merits of the rich present which she that day made of herself in the Temple.

Cruzenius, one of our most celebrated authors, speaking of the time of Luther's fatal apostacy, remarks in his Chronicles, that the same year, nay, the very same day that the devil enticed that monster from the religious order which he had professed, our Lord, by a particular conduct of His Providence, called S. Thomas into it; as if in some manner to repair the injury the one did to the church, by the honour and advantage it would receive from the other.

The manner in which he made his exercises in the very beginning of his noviciate, proved the holiness of his vocation. His humility, his devotion, his exact obedience, his silence, and recollection were such, that not only the young, but even those who had grown grey in the practices of regularity, could not contemplate him without some sort of confusion, seeing a novice begin where the most perfect in a religious life are accustomed to end.

The virtues which drew on him this admiration, and which served as the basis and foundation of the spiritual edifice which he raised in his noviciate, were continual prayer, and a very extraordinary and deep humility. He remained in prayer from the end of Matins to the hour of

Prime; and after Prime, till it was necessary to return to the choir to sing Tierce and Sext, he read books of devotion, attaching himself especially to the works of S. Bernard, which he relished more than the writings of any other Father. This predilection is easily accounted for when we consider the similarity of spirit existing between them, shown so clearly in their works. This reading, with which he nourished his soul, and enlivened his devotion in his cell, at the foot of the crucifix, did not prevent him in his year of probation, from going through his theological studies again, and reading with the utmost attention to refresh his memory. He well knew how useful and necessary scholastic knowledge is to discover the mysteries of faith, and when discovered to impress them deeply on the mind.

He continued to pursue this system, and was afterwards often heard to say, that the good religious studies while he prays, and prays while he studies. According to the author whose history we follow, it was from the time of his arrival at Alcala, that he began to unite study with prayer, and prayer with study, in such a manner that they almost made one single exercise.

The other virtue, for which he became equally remarkable, was a most profound humility. Here was a man, who, at the age of thirty, was a licentiate in theology, and who had acquired by his virtue and merit a high reputation in two universities where he had taught with much success and applause; yet, who renouncing the profit and the glory that his public lectures

invariably drew upon him, was always the first at the exercises which are commonly used to try the submission of the brother novices. Whatever he did was done with so much love and alacrity, that his master was filled with astonishment and admiration.

He was a great lover of retirement and silence. To so great an extent did he carry these virtues, that had it not been noticed that he was ever ready to leave his beloved solitude at the call of charity, and to converse with those who needed spiritual advice, it would have been thought that he was close and uncommunicative from natural disposition, rather than from principle.

Besides the fasts of the order, which he kept with the same exactness as those of the Church, he imposed on himself, with the consent of his superior, several others of devotion; fasting generally three quarters of the year. On other days he eat as the rest of the community, but with so much restraint and moderation, that he always deprived himself of something, from the habit he had acquired in his penitential practices. His love of mortification was not confined to fasting. For although this is a very excellent means of keeping the body in subjection, it was not enough to satisfy him. He afflicted his body by the privation of everything which could gratify it, in order to subdue it entirely, and to render it supple and obedient to the laws of reason. He slept only four, or at most, five hours; and during Lent and Advent his bed was a single plank. The rest of the year it consisted of a straw mattress and

two simple coverlets. These habits he continued even after he became archbishop.

Such were his principles and his virtues, and such were the foundations which this devoted and fervent novice laid for the spiritual edifice, on which he ceased not to labour incessantly, until he had elevated it to that degree of perfection which we shall contemplate in the sequel of this history.

CHAPTER IV.

OF HIS CONDUCT IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES AFTER HIS PROFESSION, AND OF HIS ELEVATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

The year of probation being passed, the day for which he so ardently longed, when he should devote himself entirely to the service of God by his solemn profession, at length arrived.

He made the vows to his Lord with an extreme delight; rivers of tears flowing from his eyes; a testimony of the joy with which his soul was filled at the sacrifice he was making of his whole being to his God. The same spiritual joy was even afterwards shed abroad in his soul, when he recalled to mind the graces and mercies he received from his good God on the happy day of his profession. And even when he assisted at the profession of others, he could not prevent abundance of tears from flowing, at the thought of the blessings they were then receiving, and those he had formerly received himself.

After he was professed, he omitted none of the exercises of the noviciate. On the contrary, being persuaded, (as is indeed true,) that to perform the promises he had made to God, he must tend more and more to perfection; he kept continually impressed upon his mind, that the progress he had hitherto made in his holy career, was nothing in comparison with what he had yet to attain. And thus, as if he were but a beginner, he applied himself with more fervour and devotion than ever to the practice of every virtue, and especially to that of charity. Not that this divine virtue, which was, as it were, the soul of every other virtue in which this Saint excelled, began to be practised by him only after his profession. By no means. He had always loved and practised it even in his childhood, as I have elsewhere related; yet, it had lain dormant, a captive and prisoner in the solitude of the noviciate. But as soon as he was at liberty to exercise it without prejudice to obedience, he set himself to attend on the sick with all imaginable fervour and humility. He remained in the infirmary as much as possible, to assist and console the poor sufferers. He prepared their food, he swept the room, made their beds, washed them, and rendered them every service in his power, without waiting for the orders of the superiors, who soon perceived that his excessive charity prompted him to make these visits of his own accord.

He was always anxious to be the first to undertake the most vile and abject occupations in

the monastery, endeavouring to anticipate the wishes and requests of those who needed his assistance.

To exhort others to imitate him in these pious cares, he said sometimes to his friends, speaking to them in a familiar manner, and even in chapter to his religious, when he became superior, that the infirmary was like the bush of Moses, where he who devotes himself to the sick will assuredly find God among the thorns with which he will be surrounded. Where will a man find so many opportunities of practising the admirable virtues of patience, humility, and love, as among the crosses and trials which await him at every turn, at the bed-side of the sick? Our Saint was so assiduous in his tender attentions to the poor invalids, and gained their love and esteem to such a degree, that they looked upon him and listened to him, as an angel sent from God, if not to cure, at least to strengthen and console them in their sufferings.

But whilst thus employed, our Lord destined him for other and more important duties, by which he could serve Him better, and bring more glory to His name. For this end he commanded him, through his superiors, to prepare for Holy Orders. He was ordained priest at the age of thirty-three, some time after his profession, and celebrated his first mass on Christmas day, with an inexpressible tenderness and devotion. He was completely absorbed in the contemplation of the favours and mercies that this Infant God brought to man by His birth; and remained in

this state for some time, without being able to rouse himself. The meditation on this adorable mystery drew floods of tears from his eyes when he came to the hymn of the angels, Gloria in Excelsis, and to those wonderful words of the Preface, Quia per Incarnati Verbi mysterium. These feelings of tenderness for the birth of our Lord, were so deeply impressed on his heart, that he always fell into transports and ecstasies, whenever he offered the adorable Sacrifice on this holy day. When he was archbishop, he was accustomed to celebrate the two first masses of Christmas in his chapel, that none but his almoners might witness those divine operations which passed in his soul, and which he could not conceal because of the brightness and splendour which were spread over his countenance. After having finished his two masses, he retired into his oratory till the hour of office, when he went to the church to celebrate high mass. He usually performed this, being archbishop, with the same humility and modesty of apparel as he did when a simple religious. It is impossible to read with any degree of attention, the sermons he has left to the public upon the mysteries of this sacred night, without catching some sparks from that fire of devotion which this holy prelate breathed at the sight of the cradle and the infancy of Jesus.

Such, then, was the beginning of his priesthood; and the end was conformable with the beginning. In every situation of his life he had loved retirement and prayer; but after he was

elevated to the dignity of priest, and every day allowed, by the honour and obligation of his character, to approach the table of the Lord, he endeavoured to make himself more and more worthy by redoubling his devotions. He assisted night and day in the choir, and in every necessary duty in the community. Nor was he less assiduous in his attentions to the sick. All his remaining time was employed in preparing for mass, except a small portion which he allotted to his studies.

From the time that he first frequented the schools, he had acquired the habit of often making a serious examination of his feelings and conduct, to discover whether he had advanced or fallen back in the way of the spiritual life. He continued the same practice after he was a religious, and performed it with still greater exactness when he became a priest, from the more fervent desire he had of attaining to perfection. He used to say, that it is a bad sign in a priest, when he is seen every day to approach the altar without becoming better or more holy; confirming his words by this saying of S. Bernard: "The religious who does not advance in the way of God, recedes." It was for this reason he so carefully practised a daily examen, and recommended it to others, as a most important and necessary exercise for those who have any real regard for their salvation.

It was by this means also that he learnt to regulate his time and his occupations so exactly, that he had not a single useless moment in the

whole day, but laboured continually for his own spiritual profit, or that of his neighbour, which he desired no less ardently than his own.

He was never seen in the cells of others, nor suffered any one to enter his own, unless charity required it. When he was compelled to open his door to speak to those who had business with him, he used as few words as possible in satisfying them, and quickly returned to his beloved retreat. Those who wished to see him generally sought him in one or other of the five places he had consecrated to the five sacred wounds of our Lord—the altar, the choir, the library, the infirmary, or his cell; for in any other place it was almost useless to seek him.

One of his greatest sorrows was to see a religious idle and useless; and if by chance he saw one without any employment, he would endeavour to remedy the evil by discreet and charitable means; and compared the religious without occupation to a soldier without arms, exposed to the attack of his enemy.

All loved him. All in the monastery honoured him for his sweetness and his prudence. He used every means in his power to preserve peace in the community, and if there happened to be the least breach of concord between any of the brothers, he quickly united them again in the bonds of fraternal charity. He revered his superiors as those who held the place of God. The obedience that he rendered them was prompt and ready, and he never offered reasons to obtain dispensa-

tions from their commands, or to delay in the slightest degree their execution.

He was patient beyond measure, and humble and affable to all men. Not that he conversed equally and familiarly with all, but with those only whose spirit and virtue were tried; remembering the counsel of the wise man, that we should bestow our love upon all men, but give our confidence only to a few.

CHAPTER V.

HE TEACHES THEOLOGY AT SALAMANCA.

The pleasure that he found in these holy and devout exercises, so entirely satisfied his mind, that if it had been in his power, he would for ever have renounced all other things to remain as a simple religious, and to end his days in that hidden life which his soul loved. For he judged by the profit which he himself reaped from this sort of life, that it was the least perilous and the best calculated to lead on to that perfection, which he so ardently longed to attain. But the Providence of God had other designs upon him. The grace given him to embrace a religious life, was only given to dispose and prepare him for employments more conducive to the glory of God, and the good of his fellow men. His superior ordered him to teach theology in the monastery of Salamanca. He obeyed simply, without urging any of those excuses which false humility so

often makes use of, in order to be entreated to do what is requested, and thus be exalted in the eyes of men. In his course, he explained the Master of the Sentences, keeping in his lectures the same order that this illustrious doctor observes in his four books, which contain the whole body of theology. He possessed a clear head, and a firm and solid judgment, but his memory was not so happy. He told Father Roderic, a celebrated religious, that he had laboured hard to supply this defect, being obliged to explain his lectures to the students of the monastery, and to other scholars of the university, who quitted their own classes to attend his.

And yet, with this new charge, which was enough to occupy entirely an ordinary man, he relaxed in none of his exercises of piety and mercy, visiting and serving the sick according to his usual custom. He had his regular hours of meditation, and if he was sometimes prevented from assisting in choir, on account of his lectures, he was the more earnest and assiduous when he could do so. Those days on which he did not hear his classes, he was never missing from the office, and was most frequently seen at matins.

Such was the life and conduct of this holy professor. Nothing was left undone on his part, to make his scholars skilful and learned theologians; but as he only regarded the glory of God, and the good of their souls in their advancement, he was much more anxious to see them humble and devout, than excelling in that knowledge which puffs up the mind. He exhorted them by

his words, and still more by the example of his virtues and his holy life, to join the fear of God with the study of letters; because, he would say, "Science and doctrine without piety, are like a sword placed in the hand of a child, who can make no good use of it, and may injure many." At other times he would address those likely to fall into the opposite fault; for he equally blamed the mistake of many, who, under the pretext of piety, fail to apply themselves enough to study. He would say to them, that sanctity alone may be very advantageous, to those who possess it, yet it is of little value, as regards the church and our neighbour, unless united with a knowledge of doctrine, of Holy Scripture, and of the Fathers. And that it is an abuse to imagine, that the study of letters is incompatible with devotion and interior recollection in a monastery.

That of the Augustines of Salamanca was soon crowded with a number of excellent religious, raised by our Lord's goodness to a high degree of piety and knowledge; all distinguished servants of God, perfect and apostolic men. Several of them went afterwards to the West Indies, to labour in the conversion of the new world. Among others were the fathers, Christolph of S. Martin, Peter of Pampeluna, John Cruzati, and above all, Father Jerome Ximenes, one of our Saint's most familiar friends. This holy man, who, like his Master, sought only the means of glorifying God and procuring the salvation of souls, having learnt that an infinite number in America were lost for want of instruction and catechising in our holy

faith, entreated S. Thomas, as soon as he became provincial, which was in the year 1529, that he would send him into those distant regions, to labour in his Lord's vineyard. S. Thomas, who well understood his character, consented to his earnest entreaties, and gave him as companions in his labours two of those before mentioned, with several others that he thought well fitted for this apostolic ministry.

Among the gifts which this Saint had received, that which S. Paul calls the discernment of spirits was very conspicuous in him. He had no sooner entered into conversation with a person, than he seemed to discover by an interior light what were his desires, thoughts, and inclinations. It was in this way he knew the zeal, the strength, and purity of intention of those holy labourers whom the Son of God called to the Indies to preach His Gospel. His joy and consolation were extreme in sending them forth on this glorious mission; while at the same time he regretted deeply that his duties as provincial would only allow him to accompany them in heart, and with his prayers. He embraced them tenderly on their departure, and when they threw themselves at his feet, entreating his blessing, he said, "I give it you, as your father and superior. Go, my children, go, my brethren. He who sent His apostles to spread His Gospel throughout the world, and to announce the glad tidings of salvation, is the same God who now sends you to preach our holy faith to the Gentiles. Fear not to cross the seas, however long and perilous your

voyage may be. Go boldly from Christian countries, to those of savage and barbarous nations; go courageously and with a confidence of success. For one of these two things is certain; either, by the grace of God, these idolatrous pagans will become faithful Christians, or it will be permitted, for your good, that they shall not believe your words, and will bestow on you the crown of martyrdom."

The event verified his words. At first the difficulties they met with seemed almost insurmountable. But by their incessant labours, and unwearied efforts in preaching, joined to the example of their holy lives, accompanied by the miracles which our blessed Lord enabled them to perform, to confirm the truth of their doctrine, this ungrateful country, which hitherto had produced only the thorns and briars of sin, became fertile and abundant in good works, through the thousands of souls that these first evangelical conquerors of the new world, drew from the darkness of error and idolatry into the clear light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Before leaving this subject, to prove that to S. Thomas of Villanova, under God, ought to be attributed the good effected by the fathers of this order for the glory of God and the propagation of our holy faith, we will here insert a letter of grateful acknowledgement, addressed to him by Father Jerome Ximenes at a time when he was not provincial, but only superior of the Augustines of Burgos. By this we may see that that country was indebted to him for many pray-

ers, fasts, and other good works, performed with the intention of obtaining its conversion, as well as for sending them his religious as missionaries, and procuring the means necessary for their subsistence.

"Reverend Father,

"The peace of God be with you.

"Our Fathers and Brethren, by the grace of God, all arrived safely in this city of Mexico, the sixth of September last, 1539. We are all of one accord in the belief that our Lord Jesus has prepared an ample and rich crown for your Reverence, since he inspired you to do so much for the achievement of the holy work in which we are engaged. In reality we may call it your work; for you have contributed more than any other towards it. We owe you a deep debt of gratitude, and are, in truth, the children of your much honoured paternity, for whom we feel a sincere and cordial affection. To testify our thanks in a worthy manner towards you, it would be necessary to write them in letters of gold, or rather in our own blood; still we trust that this will be sufficient to express to you the feelings of our hearts. But we doubt not that the Master in whose vineyard we are labouring by your means, has written your name in eternal and ineffaceable characters in the book of life. Certainly, His Divine Goodness clearly shows how agreeable our poor efforts to enlighten this unhappy nation are to Him, by the fruit which is every day produced from the seed of the word,

and by the care he takes to send His ministers to discover new countries, and to make new conquests for the publication of His gospel. A year ago, a religious of S. Francis, a Frenchman, set out from these provinces to make discoveries where our governor had not yet been able to penetrate. After having travelled five hundred leagues of inhabited country, he came to a desert of sixty more, which he crossed, and arrived at a very populous kingdom, containing fortified cities, filled with beautiful and sumptuous edifices. The inhabitants were civilized, and most of them wore double robes of silk after the fashion of the augurs of the ancient Romans, and resembling Europeans in all other respects. I will be silent as to the riches of this country, because what I should say would appear incredible. He found there an infinite number of temples dedicated to idols. Some of them were covered both within and without with emeralds, and other equally precious stones. Our Spaniards, whose desire of gold has led, and still leads them, to encounter the perils of the southern coast, assure us in like manner that they have discovered a number of large and beautiful islands near the land. I say this to your reverence, that you may know what service you have rendered to our Lord in sending labourers into his vineyard, and also to induce you to send us many more, that we may extend the knowledge of the Lord through the length and breadth of the land. As for those you last sent us, with the young man to whom you wish

me to give the habit, they have arrived safely, after having encountered many perils and fatigues. But as we have an abundance of every thing necessary for their refreshment, we shall endeavour to re-establish their health as soon as possible, and send them each one to his station, except the novice, and brother Diego of Vertaviglio, who remains as master of our young professed at Mexico. All here are by the grace of God in good health, and entreat Him with our whole hearts, that it may please Him to increase in you that charitable spirit which He has so liberally bestowed on you in favour of this holy work, and to preserve you in His grace.

"Your very humble

"Brother Jerome Ximenes.

"From Hapichetla, Oct. 9, 1539."

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE WONDERFUL TALENT FOR PREACHING THAT GOD BESTOWED ON S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

We will now resume the thread of the history that we left for a moment, to dwell on the mission of the disciples of this great Saint to the West Indies.

His provincial, being informed of the great talents possessed by S. Thomas, not only for instructing in the schools, but also for preaching in the public pulpits, judged that it was high time

a man of such acknowledged merit and sanctity should appear in the world, to enlighten it with his doctrine, and to inflame it with the love of God by the example of his holy life. For this reason he ordered him to close his instructions, and leave the pulpit of the schools to ascend that of the Church, in order to preach the Gospel, trusting that God, who had given him the requisite qualities for the office, would be glorified by him, and his neighbour edified.

He obeyed the command of his superior without hesitation, firmly believing that in accomplishing his will he accomplished that of God, whom he revered in his person.

The holy evangelist, speaking of the Son of God, takes especial notice of two things respecting His preaching. In the first place, he says that having one day entered into the synagogue at Nazareth, He took the scripture, and in explaining it applied the passage of Isaiah to Himself, saying it was of Him the prophet spoke these words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath sent me; He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up." The second thing which he remarks is, the wonderful silence and gravity He always preserved; He, who is the Word of the Eternal Father, and who makes the tongues of infants eloquent. By the first He teaches us how absolutely necessary it is for the preacher who would worthily acquit himself of his ministry, to live holily, in order to draw

down the Spirit of God into his soul, to retain Him there, and, as it were, oblige Him to water with His pure and heavenly dew the seed of the word which he is sowing, that it may be fruitful. And, moreover, that he ought not to engage of himself in this apostolic function, nor consult his own wishes, but should wait till the Spirit of God call him, and speak to him by the express command of his superior. By the second He teaches us that the office of a preacher is no child's play, but a most serious employment, leaving no room for the follies and giddinesses of youth. He who undertakes it should be especially careful that he does not contradict by his conduct the truths which his lips utter, and thus weaken the authority with which he ought to announce the holy doctrines of the Gospel.

Our holy preacher entered upon his office with these necessary dispositions. He was of mature age, and the order of his superiors, which was the seal of his mission, together with an abundance of very singular gifts and graces bestowed on him by God, enabled him to acquit himself worthily of his duties.

Though in his manners and conduct he possessed the wisdom of the old, even in his early youth, yet he did not begin to preach till he was thirty-six, and even then not without an express command; so great was his humility. It was an extraordinary thing to see how the rich and the noble flocked from all parts to see and hear him. Bishop Magnanaton, in his Abridgment of his Life, says, that he preached with such power and

energy, and so great a demonstration of zeal for the salvation of souls, that his renown was spread throughout Salamanca, every one regarding him with almost the same admiration they would have felt had they seen one of the apostles, or an angel descended from heaven in a human form, to preach the Gospel.

Father John Hurtado, a religious of the order of S. Dominick, one of the most celebrated theologians and greatest preachers then in Spain, finding some difficulty in what the great, the little, the simple, and the learned, all assured him as to the exceeding excellence of S. Thomas as a preacher, determined to judge for himself how far all that he heard was true. He saw and heard him; and at the end of the sermon, being struck with astonishment and quite overcome, he exclaimed that the doctrine which he preached was not studied in books, but came direct from heaven, and could only have been learned at the feet of Jesus Christ. Then again, considering the apostolic liberty with which he reproved vices, his power of persuading, the fire with which he inflamed all hearts, and that inimitable manner with which he induced men to reform their depraved morals, to fly sin, and to embrace virtue, this great religious could not contain his admiration, crying out, "For ever praised and blessed be our Lord and our God, for having given us in these times a Saint, and so admirable a minister of the Gospel. As to myself, I confess that I had difficulty in believing what I heard of this father, because it seemed to me that those ac-

counts were exaggerated, but I say with truth, that what they then told me was nothing in comparison of what I have myself now seen."

Soon afterwards, he was entreated to preach the Lent sermons in the Cathedral of Salamanca, just at the time when all Spain was in commotion; most of the provinces revolting against the sovereign in the year 1521. He preached with so much success, that the same Don Juan of Magnanaton, Bishop of Segovia, (who speaks as a witness, and as one of the conquests of this holy preacher, who drew him from the vanities of the world, to follow our Lord in the narrow way, by entering the order of S. Augustine,) assures us that he made so many and such remarkable conversions at Salamanca, that those who witnessed the change in this city said, that it seemed rather that Salamanca was turned into a monastery, than that there were monasteries in Salamanca: so great and so universal was the reformation of manners in all sorts of persons. All the religious houses of both sexes had an opportunity of making a rich harvest; every one was burning so much with the fire of devotion, with which this apostolic man kindled all hearts, that not only those who made open profession of virtue, but those who were the most attached to the world by sensual pleasures, and by the cares of riches, which our Lord calls thorns which choke the divine seed, came in crowds to hear him.

Of all who listened to him, none could resist the fire of those ardent words which flowed from

his inmost heart, to light in that of others the divine fire which burnt and consumed his own breast. The most considerable fruit which God drew from his preaching, and the example of his holy life, consisted principally in the conversion of the greater part of the young people of Salamanca, who, eager to quit the world, pressed into every order, entreating to be admitted; so that not having room to receive all those who presented themselves, the superiors were obliged, after filling their noviciates, to send the rest to the other towns of Castile, whose monasteries were in like manner quickly filled; all of them publishing wherever they went, the wonderful talents with which God had blessed His servant. Even Philip the Second, having heard of the renown of this holy religious, was persuaded that he could not give his son Charles a better master, one more worthy or more capable of instructing him. He afterwards appointed him to the bishopric of Segovia, thus giving the first proof of his sense of our Saint's merits.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GREAT VIRTUES WITH WHICH THE SAINT ACCOMPANIED HIS PREACHING.

It is very difficult for those who are constantly engaged in preaching, not, in time, to diminish somewhat of the rigour and severity of their lives; and especially when they have gained a

high reputation, and are often sought after by hearers and others; by the one to have their doubts resolved, and by the others to receive counsels for the regulation of their life and conduct. This fatigue, added to the burden which the office of preacher necessarily brings with it, sometimes deprives him of the tranquillity and interior recollection which he enjoyed before he was induced by charity to take on himself this increase of duty.

But although the numbers that flocked to our Saint, anxiously desiring his advice, when added to the labour of preaching, might have sufficiently occupied and indeed oppressed him, yet it did not excuse him to give to prayer and meditation less time than before, or to omit any of his accustomed fasts and abstinences. He appeared equally recollected in himself, and as great a lover of penance as before, afflicting his body by fasts, watchings, and by the privation of whatever could in the least degree flatter his senses.

As he designed the good of others as much as his own, in all that he did, hoping to persuade his auditors of the necessity of penance by example as well as by words; our good God gave so much power to his preaching, that he by his sermons generally obtained his end, the salvation of sinners. As all knew assuredly that the Saint urged nothing upon others which he had not first practised himself, he carried away the minds and hearts of his hearers like a torrent, and led them to such feelings as he wished them to possess, to detach them from the

love of sin, and to lead them in the end to the love of virtue.

He was once asked by a friend who was lost in admiration and wonder at the effects of his preaching, what books were in his opinion the best, and most adapted for those who exercise the ministry. "Every book approved by the Church," said he, "is good, and always giving the first place to the Holy Scripture, which is preferable to every other book, there is not one from which the preacher may not derive much profit, provided only that he have these two qualities, holiness and humility." He said also there was a strange error into which certain preachers were apt to fall: they destroy their health in the exercise of preaching, in order to benefit their neighbour, and entirely forget themselves; they think only of reforming the lives of others, while they neglect to correct their own; the very thing with which they ought to begin. He also greatly condemned, not in public but when in private with his friends, those preachers who depend too much upon their studies, and who, neglecting prayer, employ more time than they ought in amassing thoughts and conceptions from books, to be produced afterwards in the pulpit; imagining, that to succeed in this science, it was more necessary to be studious men, than men of prayer. To counteract this error, he collected a multitude of passages from scripture, proving how necessary it is for the evangelical preacher to apply himself seriously to the exercise of humility and of continual and fervent prayer.

What S. Thomas of Villanova recommended so strongly to others, he practised rigidly himself. He had acquired such a habit of prayer, that according to those who knew him best, his heart was constantly raised to God, speaking to Him interiorly in the midst of business and the most complicated occupations. It was the same, even after he became archbishop, whether giving audiences or replying to those who came to treat with him on matters of importance. Before he engaged in any affair, he was accustomed to retire into his oratory, and there throwing himself on his knees before a crucifix to entreat Almighty God that it would please Him to teach him what he ought to say, and how he ought to behave on that occasion, that what was done might redound to His greater glory and the good of his neighbour.

He was not curious or precise in speech. Nor did he pique himself on the beauty or ornament of his language. His discourse was well chosen, clear, and concise. He was always especially careful that the doctrine he preached should be strong, devout, and full of the Spirit of God, that his auditors might receive it, not with praises and admiration, which he despised as dangerous and superfluous, but as a Christian ought to receive it, with a feeling of its coming from God, and with a sincere desire to amend and to become better for the future. Whence it often happened after his sermons, that his hearers bitterly deploring their sins, would throw themselves at the feet of a confessor, scarcely

able to speak from the excess of the grief and regret which they felt within them.

His name was known everywhere throughout Castile, especially at Burgos and Valladolid, where at that time Charles the Fifth held his imperial court. That sovereign, together with the empress, were astonished at what they heard of S. Thomas's great talents for preaching; but when they listened to him themselves, they acknowledged he surpassed his reputation. Their majesties wrote immediately to his provincial, to say that they would retain him for their ordinary preacher, and as such they wished that he might remain at Valladolid, for their particular benefit. They assisted regularly at his sermons during Lent, as also on the Sundays and principal festivals of the year, together with a wonderful concourse of people, of prelates, and of the grandees of Spain. The emperor sometimes came without either guard or retinue, that he might hear him more at his ease, remaining there in that state to the end, as an ordinary person would have done.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT, WITH SOME EXAMPLES.

To constitute a true preacher of the gospel, it would have seemed sufficient to possess the gifts and graces we have already seen carried to so high a degree of perfection in S. Thomas of

Villanova. But the Holy Spirit, who intended to make use of him in an extraordinary way, had endowed him with two other virtues of great value in giving power and efficacy to his mission; that like another Jerome, he might destroy, build up, and edify. To speak correctly, they should rather be called graces and celestial favours than virtues, since all the efforts of the human mind are incapable of acquiring them, or giving them to others. God alone can grant them, of His infinite goodness and mercy, to whom He pleases and when He pleases.

The first of these graces was a certain light or interior view, by means of which, when ascending the pulpit, he knew, or rather the Holy Spirit discovered to him, the defects and spiritual necessities of his auditors, in order to apply the most appropriate remedy. The bishop of Segovia in the Abridgment of his Life, mentions this peculiarity as very wonderful, his auditory being composed of such a variety of minds and of situations in life; viz. prelates, bishops, princes, counsellers, courtiers; besides an innumerable concourse of people of all sorts and conditions. Yet all felt enlightened and inflamed by the power and brilliancy of the very same discourse, as if he had uttered it for each one in particular, or as if they had already thrown themselves at his feet, enabling him by a humble confession of their maladies, to apply the remedy he judged the most proper and salutary. And what is still more wonderful, his words being written and pronounced by the lips of another, had, in some sort,

the same effect as when delivered by himself. Dom Gaspard d' Avalos, Archbishop of Granada, having to preach on one of the principal festivals of the church, and anxious to produce a great effect on the minds and hearts of his people, entreated our Saint to gratify him with one of his conceptions, proper to that solemnity. He excused himself at first, and endeavoured to escape from granting the request; believing from the mean opinion he held of himself, that his productions were unworthy of notice. But the archbishop would take no denial, and he at length yielded to his wishes.

Now although this prelate had all the parts of a good preacher, and was accustomed completely to satisfy his hearers, yet on this occasion he touched them to such a degree, that on his leaving the pulpit his chapter came to him in a body, expressing their admiration, and exclaiming they had never heard anything like it. "Gentlemen," replied the archbishop, "it is not astonishing you should be so affected, for what I have just said is not mine, but Father Thomas's of Villanova, who communicated it to me, and who at the same time has given me a share of his spirit and zeal."

The other favour bestowed on S. Thomas by our Lord, was a very lively impression on his heart, and a deep feeling of the importance of the subject on which he preached. So that although the divine fire which enkindled his heart was sufficiently known by the inflamed words which issued from his lips, yet the graces and favours which God showered upon him were

still more visibly discovered by the ecstasies and transports of spirit, which were very usual with him. He sometimes remained ravished and deprived for a time of the use of his senses, by the force and vehemence of the interior feeling which consumed his soul, at the consideration of the glorious mysteries of our faith. The ecstasy into which he fell one Holy Thursday in the presence of the emperor was notorious, and well known by every one in Castile. While preaching, when he came to those words of S. Peter, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet," he entered so completely into their spirit and deep meaning while explaining them, and saying, "What, Lord, my feet! Thou who art my God, the glory of the angels, and all the beauty of heaven!" that he was, as it were, out of himself, absorbed, and ravished, and remained for some time without uttering another word immovable as marble, and insensible to everything around him. No other sign of life was perceptible than the tears which flowed in abundance from his eyes which were fixed and raised towards heaven.

In the year 1541, he was called to Toledo, to assist at the provincial chapter, by a letter from the Very Rev. Father Seripand, at that time general of the order, and afterwards cardinal legate of the pope, and president of the Council of Trent. Father Seripand intended to make him provincial and his vicar-general in Spain. St. Thomas, however, delayed his journey until, according to custom, and the rules of the order, he knew the provincial would be elected, fearing

they would impose the charge on him. The Very Rev. Father was much displeased with him; yet when he arrived he could not refrain from embracing him warmly, so high was the esteem he felt for his character, and so great his joy at seeing him again. Without showing any resentment, he accosted him in this cordial manner, "My son, why have you delayed to come? certainly your brethren and I have much desired to see you." He then ordered him to ascend the pulpit the next day, which was the feast of S. Michael, and the Sunday of the chapter. He obeyed without hesitation, not alleging in excuse, as he might reasonably have done, the little time for preparation given him. He treated in his sermon of the constant care and providence of God over His church, and over all the faithful, and of the debt of gratitude we all owe to our heavenly Father for whatever good we possess, and for His deputing one of His holy angels to watch over each of us. Having chosen as his text the verse of the 107th Psalm, "Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?" he thus addressed the general: "My Very Rev. Father, this verse that I have taken as the subject of my discourse, teaches us that he who is a citizen of heaven, is a stranger and pilgrim here below." In saying these words our Lord gave him so strong an interior feeling of tenderness, that he fell into an ecstasy, not being able to speak, yet shedding floods of tears in the presence of that illustrious audience, who were surprised and astonished at

seeing him preach so divinely with his eyes and by his silence. After having remained some time in this state, by a violent effort to repress this powerful feeling he recovered himself, and returning to his subject, he pursued it with a reasoning so sublime and elevated, that the theologians who were present in great numbers from divers places and of divers orders, all agreed, that humanly speaking, it was utterly impossible he could have learned such eloquence in any other school than in that of the Holy Spirit, who had Himself inspired him with it.

A similar thing happened to him when he was prior at Burgos, and was giving the habit to a novice. All the town collected on this occasion, knowing that the Saint would open the ceremony by an exhortation they were most desirous to hear. The tender age of the novice led him to take as the subject of his discourse these words of the Canticle, "Soror nostra parvula est et ubera non habet." As soon as he began to sound the depths of these words, he fell into an ecstasy as before, and remained a full quarter of an hour without speaking. Then recovering himself, and throwing his eyes around him he said, "Brethren, I ask your pardon. I have a poor and weak heart, and I feel ashamed of being so often overcome on these occasions; but I will endeavour to repair my fault." Upon which he resumed his subject, concluding it with wonderful success. Father John of S. Michael, prior of the Augustines of Saragossa, who was present, relates that these raptures were very

frequent with the Saint, especially in choir assisting at the office, where he was often seen elevated from the ground. The ecstasy into which he fell on one Ascension day was considered the longest and most wonderful. When they began to sing the antiphon *Videntibus illis* at the hour of Nones, he entered so completely into the words, that it seemed as if his soul had abandoned his body from the morning until five in the evening, in order to accompany in spirit the glorious triumph of our Lord on the Mount of Olives; there appearing not the least sign of life in him all that time. It was also noticed on another occasion that he was divinely transported in spirit upon Mount Tabor when he came to those words, *Domine bonum est nos hic esse;* imagining himself among the apostles and prophets, contemplating the Son of God in His glorious transfiguration. Yet far from being exalted by these favours, bestowed on him by our Lord for the purpose of revealing the deep reverence His servant had for His Holy Word, he endeavoured as much as possible to hide them from the eyes of all men.

CHAPTER IX.

OF HIS CONDUCT IN THE RELIGIOUS OFFICES IMPOSED ON HIM.

In addition to the graces and virtues already mentioned, S. Thomas of Villanova possessed a singular prudence and discretion; and he was

endowed with good sense and a solid judgment, accompanied with that dovelike simplicity so highly recommended to His disciples by the Son of God. Every one struck with such extraordinary acquirements, with his holiness, and the admirable nature of his instructions, hastened eagerly to him, to obtain the benefit of his counsels for the regulation of their lives or the quieting of their consciences.

He was admired and respected by all the great men of the court. Don Juan de Tavera, cardinal archbishop of Toledo and constable of Castile, never undertook any thing of the slightest difficulty without first consulting him, so great was the opinion he entertained of his wisdom.

At the sacred tribunal of penance he was unequalled, uniting gentleness, firmness, and prudence together, in an incomparable manner. His thirst for the salvation of souls was insatiable. He was naturally so benign and easily led to compassion, that the moment he found a penitent at his feet confessing his sins, his heart was softened and his words full of tenderness. However great his love of retirement, he was always willing to quit it for the duties of the confessional, to change the sweets of solitude in order to soothe the heart of the mourner in that holy Sacrament. Never did he show any sign of impatience or disgust, however wearisome or hateful the matter of confession might be. On the contrary, he wept and groaned with those who wept and groaned; and while showing them

the enormity of their offences, to lead them to repentance and a true sorrow, he at the same time consoled them, and encouraged them to wipe out their sins by tears and a holy and salutary penance.

His boundless charity, which led him to encounter any labour for the good of souls, often drew from the very edge of the precipice to the gate of salvation, those who at the sight of their sins would otherwise have rushed headlong into the gulf of despair.

That conduct which made people of the world revere him as a saint, endeared him especially to the religious of his province, who soon raised him to the offices of the order, without waiting for the time of profession, as their constitution demanded. They rightly judged that the defect of time was more than sufficiently supplied by his extraordinary merit. For several years he was superior of the principal convents of Castile, among others of Salamanca and Burgos. At the latter of these he loved especially to dwell, not only on account of the quiet and tranquillity of the place, but because of the devotion he bore to the holy crucifix, which by its miraculous sweat renders the church of the Augustines, where it is honoured, one of the most famous in all Spain. The convent at Valladolid was also blessed for some time with his superintendence, the emperor, who resided there, being desirous of his presence for his own spiritual benefit.

Though called by holy obedience to command,

he behaved towards all as if he were their inferior. No change was perceptible in him, except that he was noticed to be more zealous and fervent than ever in all the exercises of religion. He considered that as in authority he was raised above others, he was bound to set them a good example by surpassing them in the practice of every virtue. He meditated continually on the admirable advice given by S. Augustine, in his rules, to the superiors of his order, where he tells them that they ought to impress deeply on their minds, that the only happiness of commanding consists in the power it bestows of serving others. That it is certainly necessary that inferiors honour and respect their superiors; but that the duty of superiors consists in humbling themselves, from the fear of God, even at the feet of those they command; in setting them an example in every good work; in correcting haughty spirits; in encouraging the pusillanimous; in bearing with all; in being ready to take the penances of the weak, and to be cautious and tender in imposing them on any. He further adds, that although both may be necessary, it is far better to gain inferiors by love than by fear; and that it should never be forgotten that Almighty God will call superiors to give a strict account of all those He has committed to their care.

St. Thomas acquitted himself well of his charge. He saw the importance and excellence of this advice of S. Augustine's, and practised it to the very letter. He was the first to en-

gage in the most abject and menial offices of the house, and others, admiring his conduct, soon imitated him. His exemplary humility superseded the necessity of commanding. All obeyed his very wishes with a ready cheerfulness, seeing one whose holiness was revered not only throughout Spain but the whole world, treating them with the affability and affectionate familiarity of an equal. Yet he well knew the art of uniting gravity with humility in such a manner, that every one paid him the respect due to his situation; his familiarity never lessening the dignity of his office.

He laboured incessantly to lead his religious on to perfection. He ardently desired that they should be pious and modest in their deportment, devout at the altar and the divine office, and at all times filled with a spirit of interior recollection, without which he considered all exterior show of religion as utterly useless. He mourned as deeply for the sins of those under his authority as if he had committed them himself; fasting, and disciplining himself even to blood, for faults in which he had no other share than what his charity induced him to take on himself. He was not of the number of those whom the Evangelist reproves as loading the shoulders of others with heavy burdens whilst refusing to help them with one of their fingers; on the contrary, he would never accept of any dispensation from the strict observance of the rule himself, and yet to others he was lenient and gentle, releasing them from the performance

of certain things when he could do so without prejudice to the laws of God.

As he loved peace and tranquillity, he was the declared enemy of all kinds of novelties, because he considered them as almost invariably the fruitful seed of troubles and dissensions. For this reason he changed nothing in his monastery, but strictly adhered to the laws of his ancestors. He was a great lover also of justice and equity, which caused him to be very exact in the infliction of those punishments deserved by any of his religious. At the time when the offence was committed, he said nothing to them, but waited a fitting opportunity to reprove them, using gentleness or severity as he thought most advisable, but always with profit to the offender, who being no longer under the influence of the passion which caused his fault, received the correction of his superior with gratitude and humility, and as a mark of his prudence and love.

Sometimes even a single glance of his eye was sufficient to cure their spiritual maladies. At other times, though he knew by the light of the Spirit of God all their tempers and inclinations, he would conceal his knowledge, and appear not to notice the faults of some of his religious, hoping that without his speaking to them, God would open their eyes, and provide the remedy. Of several instances which might be given in proof of this, one will be sufficient. When prior at Burgos, he knew that one of his religious, Father John Rinçon, had fallen into a very considerable fault, and richly deserved

punishment; yet he permitted him to escape, saying nothing to him of what had passed. But God, to whom he recommended him in his prayers, accompanied with fasts and disciplines, touched his heart with so lively a sense of the greatness of his fault, that he made a sincere confession, and was ever afterwards regarded by his brethren as a perfect model of a religious. Now as this Father John knew that our Saint could not be ignorant of his fall, he was astonished that he treated him with his usual kindness, and even gave him the preference to his brethren in choosing him as his companion when he went to take possession of the archbishopric of Valentia. Quite overcome with this distinction, the father asked him why, with the knowledge which he knew he must possess of his misery, he had honoured him by this choice. "My son," replied he, "it is true that I know your fault, but I also know you have done penance for it. Love God, and serve Him faithfully."

His patience in bearing with the infirmities of all made his government mild and amiable. He measured each, not according to his strength, but his charity. He condescended to the weak, aroused the indolent, and encouraged the cowardly; giving counsel to the simple, and making himself all things to all men. Though his care of the sick had always been great, he increased it tenfold when he became superior. All the time he could spare was given to them; serving, assisting, and consoling them. Whatever were his occupations, he never passed a day without visit-

ing the infirmary two or three times, and always contrived to meet the physician there. He fed them with his own hand, and rendered them every other assistance with as much love and tenderness as if each had been a beloved brother. He also provided for the whole community with the same care and charity, anticipating all their wants in so thoughtful a manner, that his religious were never deprived of any thing which their rule allowed.

CHAPTER X.

ST. THOMAS IS ELECTED PROVINCIAL TWICE CONSECUTIVELY IN TWO DIFFERENT PROVINCES.

As he naturally loved solitude, and had no greater joy than that which he experienced when praying in his cell at the foot of his crucifix, or in studying the Holy Scriptures, the charges imposed on him in the order were a heavy burden to him. Nevertheless, having through obedience once accepted them, he made a virtue of necessity, to use a common expression, and offered as a sacrifice to his Lord, the distaste and repugnance he felt in commanding; and, without showing his dislike, he performed his duties with all the prudence and charity which has been already described.

On surrendering the office of prior, he was twice elected provincial in the two provinces into which Castile had been divided by an

apostolic brief of Clement VII., to facilitate the visiting of convents by diminishing the extent of the province. Both demanded him with many entreaties; but at it was the province of Andalusia in favour of which this division had been made, it was preferred to that of Castile, which did not obtain him as provincial till the next triennial election. He made use of every means his ingenious humility could suggest, to be exempt from this charge. He endeavoured in both cases to persuade the fathers not to elect him, alleging at first his incapacity for such an office; and seeing this reason was not accepted, he had recourse to another, which he had not yet employed. He represented to them that it was for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, that he should apply himself rather to preaching than to the office of provincial, which demanded a man's whole time and energies, and which would be far better filled by many of the fathers more worthy and more fitted for it than himself. He depended upon this argument, and thought the fathers would have regard to the glory of God which seemed concerned in it, and would press him no further. But it happened otherwise. They answered him, that not to submit to an election which had been made with all the proper forms, and not to accept a charge in which he could render such good service to God and the province, was evidently to resist His holy will; that, certainly, according to the constitutions of the order, no religious could be forced to accept an office, having the care of souls, against his

will; but still, they could not see how he could free himself from the sin of disobedience, if he refused the whole body of the province, which had elected him so canonically, and which persisted so steadily in its demand. Being at length conquered by these and similar reasons, he acquiesced, and yielded to their wishes.

On his election he began at once to consider that as his power and authority increased, so ought his virtue also. "For," said he, "as I am greater and more elevated in station, I ought to be more humble, holy, merciful, devout, and given to prayer, since I have more need than ever of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, that it may please Him to enlighten me in the discharge of an office on which depends the good or evil, both spiritual and temporal, of the whole province." He immediately set about making his visits, and overlooked all the convents with an indefatigable zeal. He encouraged the good religious, and excited them to go onwards in the road to perfection; the negligent and the idle he reproved; he instructed the ignorant, and exhorted each one of the order to labour for his salvation, in serving God faithfully, according to the spirit of his vocation.

Amongst others, there were four things which he particularly recommended in his visits. The first was, that they should all be devout and exemplary in their conduct during the divine office and the celebration of holy mass; and that the churches and the altars should be kept clean and properly dressed, "inasmuch," said he, "as

they are the portals through which all blessings come to us, both from God and man." In the second place, he urged strongly the necessity of frequent spiritual reading and meditation, comparing it to the natural heat of the stomach, which digests, strengthens, and preserves the different parts of the body in health. "In like manner," said he, "spiritual reading recollects and strengthens the mind of the religious, making him bring devotion to the altar and attention to the choir; giving him the spirit of ready obedience, endurance in labours, strength against the snares and temptations of the devil, and, in short, arranging and disposing all the feelings of the heart so skilfully, that everything succeeds happily with those who practise it in the spirit it demands." The third thing which he enforced as most important and necessary in the religious life, was peace; representing to them the advantages and blessings which that daughter of heaven brings on earth to men of good-will; and if by chance he found some restless unquiet spirit in the convent troubling the brethren, he punished him severely as a disturber of the public repose. In the fourth place he earnestly solicited his religious to use well every moment of their time, to occupy themselves in whatever holy and useful employment best suited their inclinations, and to fly idleness as the pest and entire ruin of all virtue.

He so mortally hated the waste of time in monasteries, that though he issued as few commands as possible to the superiors, lest he might

burden their consciences, yet to remedy the fault of idleness, he made use of his authority in enjoining them, in virtue of holy obedience, to reprove for the first time with mildness those religious who were seen idling here and there about the house, but if the fault was repeated, to correct them in full chapter. For a third offence he adjudged the punishment of the discipline, and if after this the fault continued, he ordered that the punishment should be augmented until amendment ensued.

To lead his religious to a love of regular observance, he used towards them the same affability and condescension that he employed in gaining strangers and penitents to a love of God. His horror of sin was so great, that he would willingly have laid down his life to prevent the commission of only a single one. And when some unhappy sinner presented himself before him, he received him with love and tenderness, after the example of the good Shepherd, who carries His wandering lamb on His shoulders, rejoicing in bringing it back to the flock. It is impossible to say how many souls he gained to God by means which his prudence and charity invented to win their hearts.

In his public admonitions he endeavoured to edify all, without giving offence to any one. At the chapter which opened his visit, he always began his discourse by giving general instructions on whatever subject he thought most necessary; but in the latter part, when it was absolutely necessary to go into particulars, his reproofs and

corrections were made with so much discretion and suavity, that they pierced the heart without arousing the pride of any, because, though his words were grave and severe, they were entirely free from the least shadow of bitterness or contempt.

His zeal for the spiritual improvement of his religious did not make him forget their temporal interests, on which he bestowed all the care his office required. Our Lord had indeed given him the true monastic spirit and love of the community. It was well known that he retained none of the valuable presents which the emperor made him, and which excited the envy of the grandees of Spain. Whatever was given him was thrown into the common mass, and nothing reserved for his own use. His cell, his bed, his clothing, even his books, which were few and merely those which were necessary, indeed every thing which he possessed, breathed the spirit of poverty and religious simplicity; he conformed himself in the use of ordinary necessaries to the lowest brother in the order.

Of the numerous things which were offered him he only accepted those which could be applied to the service of the monastery, and to the common profit, not to his own use. Leaving Valladolid for Burgos, where he had been elected superior, certain presents were offered him by persons of distinction, which he gratefully accepted, because given him to use as he thought best; but he refused the offer of a casket containing three hundred crowns of gold, because it was to

be applied to his own use and the expenses of his journey. He humbly thanked the giver, but returned the casket unopened, saying that he had no need of it. When pressed by this friend, who complained that he had accepted gifts from others, he replied, "Yes, Sir, I have taken alms from some of my friends, but they were given not for myself, but for the convent of Burgos, where I am going. If your gift had not been assigned for my especial benefit, I should without doubt have accepted it, otherwise I should have injured the house of Burgos, which greatly stands in need of assistance."

CHAPTER XI.

ST. THOMAS IS ALLIED IN FRIENDSHIP WITH THOSE ONLY WHOM HE KNOWS TO BE VIRTUOUS AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF GOD.

"LIKE loves like," is an axiom, the truth of which is universally recognised, not only in the ordinary productions of nature, but also in those of grace and the farthest removed from matter. We see every day that the saint and the just man withdraw as much as possible from the company of the wicked, to associate with those who are professedly virtuous, and who by the secret motions of the same zeal, endeavour, like themselves, to bring honour and glory to their common Master, remembering the answer made by our Lord to him who interrupted His sermon

by informing Him that His mother and His brethren were without seeking Him. "Who is My mother and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His hand to His disciples, He said, Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother." Our Saint, who had impressed deeply on his heart the precepts of this Divine Legislator, following His example, regarded no one with the eyes of flesh and blood, but only with those of charity, which have God for their object. He never attached himself by friendship to those whose virtues were not well known, and who, by a kindred feeling of piety and devotion, sought with him to advance the glory of God, and the good of souls. His inclination for retirement left him very little time for conversation with his religious, and still less with seculars, unless their spiritual good, which he endeavoured to procure at all times and in all places, drew him from his beloved solitude. So that whenever he was seen to associate familiarly with any one, it was immediately decided that he could be no ordinary person, but one in whom God had placed great gifts, to be employed conjointly with the Saint's in His service.

Among his most intimate friends was Father Diego of Vertaviglio, twice provincial of the Indies, where he built three monasteries of the order at Ucarco, Talaicapan, and Tototepée, after having converted an infinite number of pagans to the faith. Also the Fathers Salazar,

Jerome Melendes, Balthazar Malgaregio, Alphonsus Alvarado, and John Baptist of Moya, all great and celebrated religious, whom the Spirit of God had filled with an ardent and truly apostolic zeal to be the first to plant the standard of the cross, and announce the gospel to Peru and the Moluccas; our Lord enabling them to work there several miracles to establish their authority and their doctrine in the eyes of the barbarians.

It was with such persons that S. Thomas formed his habits and contracted his friendships, drawn to them by their virtues and holiness of life. He considered not the advantages of nobility, knowledge, or any of those qualities, which men of the world idolize. He frequently repeated those words of the Saviour, "He is My brother and My friend who does the will of My Father." And in fact, he had much more pleasure in discoursing with a simple brother whom he knew to be pious and faithful to his vocation, than with the learned, who had less of humility and devotion. It was the same with seculars; however rich and powerful they might be, if they were not wise, devout, and retired, he was never familiar with them, nor admitted them to his friendship, as he did the poor virtuous man, though he might be despised and disregarded by every one. The instance which he himself relates in his first sermon on the Blessed Sacrament, will suffice to show how much he loved, and in what manner he cultivated piety, wherever he met with it.

A young man who had been brought from Judaism to the true faith by a miraculous and extraordinary effect of the goodness of God, found that although he had been washed from the guilt of original sin in the salutary waters of baptism, yet there existed in the minds of the Catholics around him so strong a feeling of horror against his extraction and his former belief, that they all shunned his approach and avoided having any intercourse with him. S. Thomas, hearing this, admitted him to his friendship, often heard his confessions, and treated him with the kindest familiarity, seeing in him that pure and lively faith which made him agreeable in the sight of the Divine Majesty, and totally disregarding the false notions of men. Soon afterwards this new Christian fell ill, and as it was uncertain whether he could recover or not, he sent for our Saint, not only to receive from him the consolations which his state required, but also to make a recital of something which our Lord had deigned in his infinite goodness to make known to him, and which he though ought not to be buried with him in the tomb. Until this time he had preserved a strict secresy on the subject, having learnt that God wishes not that his servants should publish the extraordinary favours and graces bestowed on them. "Father," said he, "I have troubled you to come here both to aid me to die well, and to fortify me by your holy counsels in that last passage, and also to open my heart to you on a subject which I have hitherto kept secret. You

should know then, Father, that as I was once going with another young Hebrew to a place where my father had sent me on some business, we discoursed together of the Messiah, saying to each other, what a great happiness it would be if He should come in our days, and we should see Him with our own eyes. Speaking in this way as still covered with the thick veil which blinds the eyes of the Jews, the heavens appeared to us to open and to disclose so bright a light that the darkness of the night vanished in a moment. On relating this to my father, he told me that whenever the heavens open in this manner, it is a sign that God intends to bestow some favour on men, and that it ought to be demanded with submission to the will of God, but also with a firm hope of obtaining it. My companion and I followed this counsel, and redoubled our prayers and entreaties that it would please the King of Heaven to send us the Messiah, for whom we so ardently longed. In the midst of our prayers, at their greatest fervour, behold, we both saw at the same moment, in a globe of light, a resplendent chalice and a host above, like that which the Christian priest elevates in saying mass. At first the vision frightened us, but we were soon consoled by means of the heavenly light which shone in our hearts, and made us feel and know that there was no other Messiah than He whom the Christians adore, and that the truths which they believe and teach are those alone which ought to be received in all humility and confidence. We returned a

thousand thanks to our good Lord for His merciful condescension to us poor miserable sinners. I took care to say nothing to my father of what happened, still less did I disclose to him the design I had formed of embracing Christianity, from fear of the ill treatment I should experience at his hands. But on the first occasion which presented itself, I failed not to receive holy baptism, and I have ever since lived in the observance of the evangelical law of my Lord Jesus Christ."

The devout reader will be able to judge by so happy a beginning, to what a height of perfection this new plant of the Church by degrees attained, and whether our Saint was not right in cherishing him so carefully, notwithstanding the unjust aversion that others entertained towards him on account of his birth. Our Saint was certainly gifted with the power of discovering the holiness of others; he sometimes even saw our Lord pouring His light into his soul, in order to penetrate the souls of others, to judge of their future conduct, and what would injure or advance their salvation.

As he made his visit to the convent of Seville where the Noviciate was, learning from the Father Master that one of the novices had been tempted by the instigation of his relations, to leave the order of S. Augustine for another, he addressed him in this manner: "Go, my son, recommend yourself to God, and join your prayers with mine, that it will please Him to make known to me what he expects from you, and whether

it is for your good to make this change which your relations desire." At the end of three days he summoned him into his presence and said to him, "My son, I tell you absolutely, that it is not the will of God that you should quit this habit for another. Your first vocation is without doubt the best, and if under pretence of finding something better elsewhere, you follow the promptings of flesh and blood in preference to the advice I here give you, and leave this monastery for that which you mention, and where you are only called by the consideration that one of your relations is a religious there, I declare to you on the part of God, that you will never have the happiness of serving Him either there or anywhere else." The novice believed him, shut his ears to the persuasions of his relations, vanquished the demon who made use of them to seduce him, made his profession happily, and became one of the most celebrated religious of his time, conformably to what the Saint had predicted, who sent him some time afterwards to pursue his studies at Salamanca.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. THOMAS REFUSES THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF GRANADA AND ACCEPTS THAT OF VALENTIA.

While S. Thomas was occupied in visiting the convents of his province, and with an ardent zeal endeavouring to promote the spiritual wel-

fare of the religious under his care, our Lord, who destined him for an employment more conducive to His Glory and more useful to His Church, in order to exercise his humility, led the emperor, without any solicitation whatever, to name him to the archbishopric of Granada then vacant. This sovereign well knew his merits, and that it would be pleasing to God and a signal benefit to this diocese, to give them so holy and learned a man as prelate. He, therefore, summoned him into his presence, to inform him of his choice; but the Saint with the greatest possible modesty entreated his majesty to revoke it in favour of another. And though all his friends joined their entreaties, he could never be persuaded to accept it. As the emperor knew that S. Thomas was himself provincial, and had no superior in Spain who could command him under pain of censure to accept the dignity, and as the affairs of Granada were in a state to brook no delay, so that he could not wait for the orders of the general who was at Rome, he pressed him no further, and appointed another to fill that high station.

The Saints are so humbled by the knowledge they have of themselves, and the clear view they possess of their own weakness and misery, that they consider themselves unworthy of the employments and honours offered them. Moses is chosen and called by God himself to be the chief of His people. He knows that He who speaks is all powerful, and can provide the means necessary for the accomplishment of His will. He

sees him work miracles to encourage him to undertake the journey to Egypt for the delivery of his nation; and yet he cannot resolve to go. He entreats God to dispense with his services, and to send another more capable than himself. S. Thomas, like the prophet, was afraid to undertake so weighty a charge, which his humility represented as too much for his weakness to sustain; and when the emperor yielded, his joy was extreme at his escape, and he continued to discharge his duties as prior till the year 1544, when the emperor named him for the archbishopric of Valentia, which his uncle, Don George of Austria, quitted for Liege, to which diocese he was called by an express brief of Paul the Third.

It is true that the emperor, who was then in Flanders, did not at first nominate our Saint; at least he had no intention at the beginning of naming him, but a religious of S. Jerome, because he knew his distaste for the episcopate by his refusal of that of Granada. But our Lord overruled the designs of the emperor in the following manner, to show that the election was the work of God, not of man. When he was about to sign the commission for the appointment of the bishop, he sharply reproved the secretary for not having followed his orders, and for having written the name of Father Thomas of Villanova, instead of the religious he had mentioned. The secretary assured him that he heard the name of Father Thomas, and no other, and that he had expressly commanded him to write

the commission in his favour, but that if his majesty pleased the fault could soon be repaired by writing another. The emperor pondered on what his secretary had done, and burst forth in praises to God, who by his secretary had made known to him His holy will. He immediately signed the commission which he sent by a courier express to Valladolid, where Philip the Second, his son and successor, who then governed Spain, held his court. The joy was excessive throughout the city when the promotion of the holy religious to the episcopate was made known. Every one considered this dignity as a recompense to which by his merits he was justly entitled. But the prince especially, who loved and respected him as a great servant of God, was much gratified, and immediately sent a messenger to the monastery with his father's letter. As they were saying compline when he arrived, the Saint, who was assisting, desired he should wait till the office was finished; then going to him in the cloister he received the commission from his hand, and in a grave and serious manner humbly thanked his majesty for the honour done him, at the same time saying he would not fail to wait on the prince the next day, to offer him his thanks in person, and to inform him of what he should resolve to do in this conjuncture. An author who has written his Life, says, that having assembled his religious, he reprimanded the brother porter, and gave him a severe penance for the irreverence he had committed in entering the choir when he came to tell him one

waited to see him, and that by his elevated voice, and the joy which appeared in his countenance, he had made known to the brethren the object of the messenger.

The next day he went to the palace, and having expressed his gratitude to his imperial Majesty, and to his highness, for the honour conferred on him, he added, that being fully aware of his own insufficiency, he most humbly entreated the prince not to command him to accept a charge that he was unfitted for, and said that he had made a resolution never to become a bishop, having enough to do as a simple religious, in labouring for the salvation of his soul, without taking the responsibility of a multitude of others. The prince replied, that he should think well of what he was doing, and consider the profit the diocese of Valentia would receive from his piety and instruction. Still resolved not to accept it, he returned to the prince two or three times, reiterating his entreaties not to be exposed to so manifest a danger, and saying that after having recommended the affair to God, he was still in the same resolution, never to accept a bishopric. At last, throwing himself at his feet, he returned the commission to the prince, humbly entreating his pardon for so using him, since he could do no otherwise. When he returned to the monastery, he found there Don Peter of Pelasco, constable of Castile, Don Francis de Los Colos, commander of Leon, and several other lords who were much attached to him, and who had come to persuade him to take the care of the diocese of Valentia.

They placed before him in strong terms the opportunities it would afford him of advancing the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and urged the pleasure it would give the prince and his imperial Majesty, and the displeasure they would feel if he presisted in his refusal. Don Juan de Tavera, Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, also went to him, and taking him aside into his cell, told him that a religious ought not to be so firm or so attached to his own opinions, but that, giving up his own feelings to those of his friends, he ought to believe, knowing their affection for him, and their judgment and experience, that they were the best judges of what was good for him. To resist the will of his prince on this occasion was to resist the will of God, because he well knew that he was not elected by the voice of man, but by a special and visible order of Divine Providence.

Notwithstanding all that could be said, he still remained firm in his resolution. At length, throwing himself at the feet of the cardinal, the tears streaming from his eyes, he besought him to urge him no further, but, on the contrary, if he loved him, to do him the favour to inform the emperor that he declined the archbishopric of Valentia, and to give him his reasons for so doing, that his Majesty might not be offended at his conduct. The cardinal, seeing him inflexible, and despairing of making him yield, left him and returned to the prince to inform him of what had passed. He assured him that there was but one way for his highness to obtain his wish, which

was to write to the provincial, and get him to use his authority in commanding the Saint to accept the charge under pain of censure.

The letter of the prince was followed by several others on the same subject to Father Francis of Nieve, at that time provincial; who, moved by zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, and considering the quality and the reasons of the persons who wrote to him, and being also well acquainted with the extraordinary merits of F. Thomas, whose religious and disciple he had been, he wrote to him the following letter:

"Rev. Father,

"I have received a letter from his Highness, in which he informs me that his Majesty has appointed your Reverence to the archbishopric of Valentia, and that you have refused the same. I hereby command you within twenty-four hours after the receipt of this letter, to accept the archbishopric of Valentia. And to give you merit in so doing, I command it in virtue of holy obedience, and under pain of excommunication, Trina canonica monitione præmissa. I issue this command, because I know well that God will be served and honoured by you, and his imperial Majesty satisfied.

"I pray our Lord ever to have you in His holy keeping, for the well being of His church.

"At Toledo. This 2nd of August, 1544.

"From the Very Rev. Father Francis of Nieve,
Provincial."

He humbly bowed his neck to the yoke of obedience, and had nothing to reply to this fresh command; considering the voice of his superior in that letter as the voice of God himself.

Soon after this, he wrote to the Very Rev. Father General, as well to inform him of his promotion, as to show him that the charge which he had undertaken would not allow of his executing the commission which the general chapter held at Rome the preceding year had given him, to correct the Constitutions of the Order, together with two fathers of Italy, and one of France, called Father Peter Guerente. I will here give his letter, to show the reader through what door this Saint entered into the dignity of the prelacy.

"To the Very Rev. Father Jerome Seripand, Prior General of the Order of S. Augustine, my Father.

"Very Rev. Father, grace and peace to you in the Lord, &c.

"I have not written sooner to your Very Rev. Paternity, because we have no safe road to you since the passages of Rome are occupied. But this is an occasion which obliges me to send a courier express, to inform you that the emperor has named me to the archbishopric of Valentia, without the solicitation of any one; indeed I had not the least idea of it myself. This induces many to believe that my election was the work of God, not that of man. Although I consider it more useful and advantageous to myself to continue in the monastery where I had made my

profession, and peacefully to enjoy the sweets I found there; nevertheless the father provincial commanded under the pain of censure, that on the receipt of his letter I should consent to my election conformably to the intention of his Majesty; so that I could do no otherwise than receive it, being forced by the absolute command of my superior. I write these things to you, Very Rev. Father, knowing you love me and consider me as your son, and I beseech you to give me your benediction, and to approve and ratify what has been done in this matter, since I have had no other desire than not to resist authority, or the designs that our Lord has for me, hoping that of His great goodness He will give me strength and power necessary to the discharge of so important an office, when my only object is to labour for His glory and His service. I must, moreover, inform you, that as soon as his Holiness shall have sent me his confirmation, it will be impossible for me to accomplish what your Very Rev. Paternity, conjointly with our general chapter, has ordered concerning the reformation of our Constitutions. Nevertheless, whenever any occasion presents itself, wherein I can be of any service to you, Rev. Father, or the interest of the order, I shall always be ready to embrace it with joy, as a very obedient son.

"I pray our Lord to preserve and comfort you, Rev. Father, for His glory and the good of our holy religion.

"Valladolid, August 12th, 1544,

"From Rev. Father, your very obedient son,

"Brother Thomas of Villanova."

This would seem to be the place to mention several excellent letters sent him by persons of distinction, to congratulate him, and to show their joy at seeing him by his merits raised to the episcopate. And principally that of Pope Paul III. deserves notice, who seems, in the Bull of his elevation, so much struck with what he had heard of his piety and doctrine, as to be ready to canonise him while living. So also Philip II. writes of him to the Duke of Calabria, Viceroy of Valentia, in the highest terms of praise, not to mention several others that I will pass over to avoid prolixity.

In the same proportion as his election was a matter of joy and congratulation to others, so was it to himself the cause of the greatest pain and sadness, when he considered with what a heavy cross he was loaded, in taking so many souls under his care, and so rendering himself responsible for the Blood that the Son of God had shed for their salvation. This induced him, after he had received the bull, to decline any more visits of congratulation, being unable to restrain the tears which flowed from his eyes whenever he thought of the loss of the repose and security of the cloister, and the dangers he was about to encounter in an office so painful and perilous as that of a bishop.

He has left us a view of the state of his mind and feelings in a letter which he wrote to the same sovereign pontiff, Paul III., with which I will conclude the first part of this history.

"Beatiss. Pater.

"Very holy Father,

"It is not without fear and dismay that I have received the letters by which your Holiness constitutes me Archbishop of Valentia. For where is the man who, regarding with the eye of faith the weight of this high ministry, would not tremble and be cast down at the sight of so holy and responsible a dignity! May the very good and merciful Jesus Christ our Lord help me to serve His church, for which He descended from heaven, to found and cement it with the blood that He and His saints have shed! As it is not in my power worthily to express the gratitude which I feel for the kindness with which it has pleased your Holiness to honour me, I will at least show it in part by my conduct, acquitting myself faithfully of the office imposed on me. For I believe your Holiness is never so well pleased as when you see those whom you have called to share in your solicitudes, zealous in assisting you to govern that flock that God has committed to your care, to rule, govern, and increase it. This is assuredly my intention and resolution. May God grant that I may be able to execute it as I desire. As to the rest, I have nothing which is not yours, and which you have not acquired by the benignity your Holiness has shown me. I assure you there is no one in the world more ready than myself to render you submission and obedience in whatever it shall please you to command me. I have taken the oath of fidelity

before consecration, according to custom, and I have sent it you, as you commanded in your letter.

"May God keep and preserve your Holiness many years for the good and peace of His Church.

"From your Holiness's

"Humble and devoted creature,

"Father Thomas of Villanova."

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CONDUCT OF S. THOMAS WHEN HE BECAME ARCHBISHOP, AND OF THE FIRST PROOFS WHICH HE GAVE OF CHARITY AND PRUDENCE IN HIS GOVERNMENT.

As soon as the holy archbishop received his Bulls, he endeavoured to hasten the ceremony of his consecration as much as possible, feeling that he had now no right to employ his time in any way but in discharging the obligations he had contracted towards the flock committed to his care. The cardinal archbishop of Toledo, with two other prelates, imposed hands on him in the church of the Augustines at Valladolid; after which he prepared to leave the town immediately, to avoid the honours which he apprehended would be offered him on his departure. He spoke on the subject to no one until the morning of his departure, when, having assembled his religious, he took leave of them, after having embraced them all, and having recommended himself to their prayers. He permitted no one to accompany him but Father Francis Rincon and a servant who followed him, all three

leaving on foot quietly and without any ceremony. His mother, who passionately desired to see him, had entreated him by letter to pass through Villanova, which is almost the direct road from Valladolid to Valentia. Yet when he arrived at the place where it was necessary to determine whether he would go or not, he stopped, and as if in doubt what he ought to do, consulted his companion, who showed him that he ought not to refuse this duty to his mother, nor deprive her of the happiness of his company. "Let us pray to God," said the Saint, and falling on his knees, as he was accustomed to do before undertaking any thing, he said after a while to his companion, "Come, let us go straight to Valentia; some other opportunity will offer for me to see my mother. Relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem suam adhærebit uxori suæ." Then he arose and went on his way to Valentia, where he arrived in this poor manner.

The respect he felt for his order induced him to retire to our Lady of Succour, which is a monastery of the Augustinians, without the walls of Valentia, instead of entering the city and going at once to the archbishop's palace where he was expected.

The superior received him at the gate, threw himself at his feet, and paid him all the honour he thought due to a great prelate and to one of the most holy and learned men of his order. The Te Deum was solemnly chanted at his entry, but he would suffer no other ceremonies, nor the least extraordinary thing to be done on his

account. He remained on his knees for some time before the Blessed Sacrament, and then went into the chapel of our Lady of Succour, to whom he had always had a very particular devotion. What very much increased the joy that all felt at their holy pastor's arrival, and confirmed the general opinion that had been formed of his holiness, was a signal favour that God conferred on his diocese, even throughout the kingdom of Valentia. No rain had fallen for a long time; the earth had become so dry and arid that the poor labourers could not cultivate it. The province seemed on the eve of a horrible famine, when, upon the prayers of the Saint, the heavens suddenly opened, and poured down an abundant rain, which lasted several days, abundantly watered the fields, enabling the labourers to cultivate the earth, and rejoicing the whole country, which was in dread of the famine. Every one felt it was to the Saint they were indebted for the visible grace they had received; and all looked upon it as an earnest of the invisible and spiritual grace that God designed for them by means of his charity and doctrine.

He passed the festivals of Christmas with much recollection and devotion in the company of his brethren, said mass every day, and assisted at the Divine Office and at the Refectory, as if he had been a simple religious. The superior had much trouble in making him yield so far as to take the first seat, and give his benediction at the end.

He resolved to make his entry the first day of the year 1545, not having been able to do it

sooner on account of the heavy rains. The magistrates, accompanied by all the nobility of Valentia, conducted him from the monastery to the town-house, where the Saint adored the wood of the true Cross that had been brought there for the purpose. Following the clergy entoning the Te Deum, he was led in procession to the cathedral in the midst of a concourse of people, and then began his functions by the episcopal benediction that he gave with the usual indulgences on such occasions. After which he returned to his palace, accompanied by his canons and persons of all ranks, who loudly praised God for having given them a Saint to govern and lead them. Whilst he, on his part, to be enabled to perform his duty and satisfy their expectations, implored from on high the assistance which he should require in his responsible situation.

The next morning he celebrated mass with this intention, shedding many tears. The first proof that he gave of the mildness and benignity of his government, was seen in his leaving the altar to go immediately to visit the official prisons, to see the priests who were there, and in what manner they were treated. He was horrified with certain dark and damp cells that he perceived, and having found on inquiry that ecclesiastics were sometimes there, and that they were made for that very purpose, "If God pleases," said he, "not a single one shall ever enter there by my orders. These places seem to me more fitted for robbers and assassins than for the Lord's anoint-

ed. We will find, God helping us, other means to punish and gain our brethren." He caused them to be filled with earth, and the doors fastened up, to render them entirely useless.

Soon after this Don Gregory Carros, Michael Vigue, and Don Honnori Pelizer, canons of the cathedral, came and offered him four thousand crowns on the part of their body, to testify their joy at his presence, and to give him the means of furnishing his house, as they knew it was empty, even of the most necessary things. He received the present, and thanked them for it most affectionately, but instead of using it, he sent it to the administrators of the great hospital, that it might be used for the poor, to repair the damages the fire had a short time before done to the building. To prevent the canons from taking offence at the use he had made of their money, he said to them, "Gentlemen, I entreat you to believe I make much account of your present, and that I shall never lose the remembrance of it. Your intention was, to give me the means by your liberality of furnishing my house; it came into my mind, and I believe it firmly, that our Lord will be better served and glorified by your money being spent on the poor in the hospital, who so much need it, than if it had been employed for my use. For what does a poor religious like myself want with furniture? No, gentlemen; do not think that though it has pleased God to raise me to this station, I forget what is due to my first condition."

He used great discernment and prudence in

ascertaining the dispositions of those under his charge, and to what they were naturally inclined, in order to accommodate himself to them, not in tolerating vice by a weak condescension, but in gaining their affections to lead them to good by the most safe and gentle ways; after the example of God Himself, who disposes all things in the world according to their nature.

To impress those whom he wished to win to God, he selected the most virtuous of his people to compose his household. He acted on the same principle with regard to his clergy, choosing the most pious and learned to assist him in the administration of his charge, to show how much he valued virtue and merit.

He found much to exercise his zeal and charity; the morals of the people in the kingdom of Valentia being dreadfully depraved, libertinism reigned there with impunity. In short, it was pitiable to see to what a state the affairs of his church were reduced, by the absence of those who preceded him. To cure this inveterate evil, he would not have recourse at first to harsh measures, but prudently waited a fitting time, when he might do so without injury to any one. He began the visitation of the churches in his diocese by that of Valentia itself. There was neither town nor village where he did not preach. The zeal which he had always felt when preaching for the salvation of souls, was now increased by the consideration of what he owed to those under his care. In quality of father and pastor he spoke, as to his own chil-

dren, for whom he was willing to shed his blood if necessary for their good. According to Bishop Ceurian's account, the words which flowed from his lips in the pulpit, after he was archbishop, seemed to be, not the words of man, but fire from heaven.

It is impossible to say how many sins both private and public, were forsaken and remedied by these visits; how many persons he comforted who were bowed down by the weight of their sorrows, and how many he saved who were on the brink of despair at the sight of their sins, or the wretchedness of their worldly affairs. How many heart-burnings, law-suits, and quarrels, did he not bring to a happy termination. In fine, how many souls did he not draw from the gates of hell into the way of salvation. He published a plenary indulgence for all that was passed, as well for ecclesiastics as seculars, with an entire remission of the punishment they had deserved, entreating them with torrents of tears to do better for the future, and to begin to serve God according to their station; otherwise he should be compelled to have recourse to justice and his authority to punish those who had abused his mercy.

When returned from his visits he assembled a synod at Valentia, where he wished all his priests to meet. It was held for three days, when he attended carefully to all their remonstrances and complaints, making in their presence all the rules necessary for the improvement of their churches and themselves; ecclesiastical

affairs being in a deplorable state. As in this place his authority was great, he did not fail to exercise it on several of his priests who were inclined to rebel, some even going so far as to protest against his orders. The rest he won by gentleness and the power of reasoning, and the statutes made in the synod were published to the satisfaction of all parties. His ecclesiastics were edified by his prudence and holiness, and were resolved to maintain in their parishes what had been decided on in the synod.

CHAPTER II.

ST. THOMAS WHEN ARCHBISHOP PRESERVED THE SAME POVERTY AND MODESTY AS WHEN A SIMPLE RELIGIOUS; AND HIS NEW DIGNITY NEVER MADE HIM FORGET HIS FIRST CONDITION.

In the generality of men it is so common a thing to see the manners change with the condition, that the experience of the ancient Romans made this truth pass into a proverb, Magistratus virum probat; there being nothing more calculated to put the spirit of a man to the proof, than the raising him to responsible employments and dignities. Holy Scripture furnishes us with a striking example of this in the history of Saul. Before he was king he was called the friend of God, full of His Spirit, and with a heart pure and sincere as that of an infant. But he so perverted and changed that heart

when elevated to the throne, that God drove him from it, in spite of all the tears and prayers of the prophet Samuel, which were not powerful enough to stay the hand of Divine Justice. It is then a great proof and strong argument, that virtue has taken deep root in a man's heart when he is seen to practise it as perfectly amidst honours and dignities as in a low estate.

After S. Thomas became archbishop he never lost a particle of that modesty, humility, and poverty which he was accustomed to practise in the cloister. He was outwardly poor as well as poor in spirit, and truly loved that evangelical poverty he had professed, like all who have known and practised it, and who have said things of it which if not certain and well approved might seem exaggerated. For several years he wore the same habit as at the monastery, and did not change it till it was no longer wearable. He did the same with his under garments, causing his shirts to be repieced, and when they were too old to be used he commanded two to be made into one. As long as his doublet could be worn by putting new sleeves to it, he would not give it up, but dressed himself in it, shabby as it was, to the very last. He mended his stockings himself, keeping for that purpose a needle and thread and other useful necessaries.

Perhaps some may think that these things were unworthy of an archbishop, and beneath his dignity, and that at any rate his historian would have done well to omit them; yet in the sight of God they may have great merit. And if we

consider the spirit which prompted him to act in this manner, we shall see in them the effects and certain marks of his love of evangelical poverty, and also his wish to spare expense, that he might have more to bestow upon the poor of Jesus Christ.

The whole eleven years that he was archbishop he had but two habits, one white and one black, both of common stuff of low price. When about to purchase one a friend persuaded him to let it be of a thinner kind of stuff, so as to be light and more befitting an archbishop. He consented, thinking it would cost less, but on finding out his mistake, he begged his friend to take it back again. "Sir," said he, "you have a right to wear this thin cloth, you are master of your own property; but I, who am but a poor religious, and who have nothing that does not belong to the poor, cannot use the stuff you have brought me without doing them an injury." His friend, to satisfy him, took it for his own use, and bought for the holy prelate a common and thick serge, which he wore till it was so shabby his servants were ashamed of it, and blushed to see him so poorly clothed. So much were they distressed, that they agreed to petition him in a body to leave it off. The Saint acquiesced, and caused another robe equally coarse to be made; nevertheless, he kept the old one to mend the other when necessary; and was generally so poorly and meanly dressed, that the most humble religious would have found it hard to imitate him without blushing.

The public profession the Saint made of poverty displeased some of the children of the world; because they looked on it only with the eyes of the flesh. In his cathedral even there were some canons to whom it was unpleasant, and who entreated him for the honour of the Church he governed to be better clothed, urging that his dress was not conformable to his dignity. He answered them smiling, and in a manner both playful and serious, "Gentlemen, I am much obliged to you for the care you take of my person, but really I do not see how my dress as a religious interferes with my dignity as archbishop. You well know that my authority and the duties of my charge are quite independent of my dress, and consist rather in taking care of the souls committed to me. But if, notwithstanding, you wish me to wear any other habit, I will cheerfully do so, provided you prove to me that I do nothing by that contrary to the profession I have made." An answer so just and holy received no reply on their part, except that they besought him at least to wear a cap of a finer material than the one he then had. He yielded to their request, and to satisfy them used a cap of thinner stuff.

He was no less economical in the expenses of his table than in his dress. He was as frugal as when a religious. He never permitted any thing but the most common food to be served, except when he ate in company, when another dish was added. Still he himself never exceeded the little he was accustomed to take

amongst his brethren. At the end of each month he examined his accounts, and if his expenses of one week exceeded another he was disturbed, and warned his steward to take care, for that the wealth of the archbishop did not belong to the archbishop, but to the poor; and that before God he was obliged to restore to them whatever was expended in superfluities, and that he should carefully watch that our Lord was not displeased in this respect. He had no tapestry, and whatever they could do or say, he would never allow his room to be better carpeted than others. His steward having once bought a small carpet, and also, thinking it a great bargain, a piece of satin, on which was woven the descent from the cross; the Saint reproved him with some severity for the expense he had incurred, but at the same time said, "This piece of satin we will keep in consideration of what it represents, especially as it will be of use in the church for the preacher's chair. As for this little carpet, put it in the chapel where I say mass, but take care another time to buy nothing for the ornament of my house, but remember that I am a religious who has made a vow of poverty." His couch was a field-bed, with a mattress and two coverings; curtains but no sheets, which he never used except when ill, so great was his love of penance and holy poverty. He had no plate except a salt-cellar and a dozen spoons, which were placed on the table when he had company. His steward once told him, that what he had expended in buying earthenware plates

and dishes which were constantly being broken would have sufficed to buy a service of silver. "Do you think I am not aware of this?" said he; "I have seen and well considered it, but as I am a religious I must remain within the bounds of my first condition; what would do honour to another would be for me a shame and disgrace."

We see, then, that honours and dignities produced no change whatever in our Saint. He was as humble and poor under the mitre as he had been in the cloister. He would have no other arms than those of S. Augustine, a heart wounded and pierced, engraved upon the seal of office. When asked what he would have, he replied, "Those of my order, because there is neither nobility nor dignity that I value before the honour that God has done me in calling me by His mercy into holy religion."

CHAPTER III.

OF THE TIME EMPLOYED BY S. THOMAS IN PRAYER, AND THE FAVOURS HE RECEIVED IN THAT HOLY EXERCISE.

The holy archbishop knew well by the light of his own mind, as well as that imparted to him by God, the great labours and dangers which offices, having the care of souls, draw after them. And though he also knew he had done his utmost to prevent his election, yet the burden was so in-

tolerable to him, that he never afterwards experienced lightness or joy of heart. He could never hear himself called archbishop without a feeling of deep and bitter regret that he could not resign his charge, and pass the rest of his days in his cell. In truth, seven years after his promotion, when the emperor passed from Flanders into Spain, and was expected at Barcelona, he wrote to him, by Dr. de la Porte, entreating him to name another to the church of Valentia, which he was resolved to quit, from the pain and grief of heart he suffered under so heavy a weight, but would not do so until his majesty's arrival, nor without his consent. The emperor answered, he intended shortly to visit Valentia, and they could then consult together as to what would be most expedient for the service of God and his own consolation; thus eluding his request and leaving the affair undecided. The holy prelate said afterwards, that there were two causes of his uneasiness, which made him especially anxious to find the means of giving up his archbishopric. The first was, the account he should have to render to God of those Moors who lived in his diocese. Having received in baptism the name and character of Jesus Christ, he was their pastor, and as such charged with the care of their souls; and yet he had no power to soften their hard hearts, but had the sorrow of seeing them apostatise every day from the faith, through the most deplorable blindness. This was the reason also that he had so steadily refused the archbishopric of Granada, offered him by the emperor

when he held his court at Toledo, and that he would in like manner have refused that of Valentia if he had not been compelled by holy obedience to accept it. The second was the bad conduct and too great liberty of the ecclesiastics of his time. This he considered an enormous evil, deploring it with tears of blood; while at the same time he saw, with the deepest feeling of sorrow, that it was not in his power to remedy it to the extent he would wish. He knew that amongst them were rich and powerful men, who would resist his orders; and to undertake their reformation he foresaw would be of little avail, and perhaps endanger the peace and quiet of the province. He mourned deeply that he could not further the general reform of his diocese, by beginning at the house of God; since those who ought to have been the first to unite with him in the good work, were the first to put obstacles in his way.

The only comfort the holy pastor found in this distress of mind, was in prayer. Prayer that enabled him to support so heavy a cross as the care of his flock, and to exert himself to the utmost, to lead them to God by the safest and surest ways. His oratory was the tabernacle, to which, like Moses, he ran to learn of God what he should do, and how he should act in the difficulties which he every day encountered. Our Saint was possessed of a great understanding, an exquisite judgment, and much experience, yet he seemed to make no account of these advantages. He placed such entire confidence in God and in

prayer, that before resolving on any affair, however trifling, he always consulted Him in this holy exercise. When spoken to on any business, he would say, "I will consider of it, I will say mass to-morrow, and will recommend this affair to our good Lord, that it may please Him in His great mercy to conduct it well." He spent the greatest part of his time in prayer. His servants had but to go to his oratory to be sure to find him. Sometimes they saw him in an ecstasy, or shedding torrents of tears; at other times extended upon the ground in the form of a cross. Whenever they found him thus, they retreated as though they had not seen him, lest his humility should have caused him to be distressed. Yet his love of prayer never made him neglect his duties. He left his oratory and his prayer the moment he was called; then having concluded the business, returned without loss of time. He had given strict orders to his servants to fetch him immediately he was wanted, "Because," said he, "besides the weariness the people feel in waiting, we shall have to give an account of all the time we have caused our neighbour to lose, as well as that we waste ourselves. Never mind whether I am praying or studying; for although it may be unpleasant to be interrupted, still I am not my own; as a bishop I belong to my flock." As our Saint placed all his cares and all his occupations in the hands of God, and undertook nothing but under His auspices, our Lord blessed him in every thing he did.

He never turned away a servant that he had

once admitted to his household, nor changed his officers, except to advance their interests, and give them better employment. And the reason he was so well served was, that he chose his servants at the foot of the altar, by the gift of discerning spirits that he had received from God, so that his choice could not be followed by repentance. The very first time he saw Dr. de la Porte, he looked at him attentively, and then immediately appointed him one of his visitors. And when the doctor, being a very humble man, objected that he was not worthy of this employment, and entreated to be excused, the holy prelate replied, "You say and do just what you ought, but for all that it is my wish that you do as I tell you, because I hope that God will be glorified by your services; and I do not think I am mistaken in this idea." In the same manner he chose Dr. Ceurien as his suffragan, in spite of all the excuses he offered; amongst others, that he was not fitted for such an office, and did not believe he had the necessary acquirements to discharge it well. "Do not say that," replied the Saint; "when I entered the episcopate I was not more fitted for it than you, but God who called me, without any wish on my part, as you well know, has led and assisted me by His grace and mercy. Obey then my commands; for if His Divine goodness has called you, and chosen you to serve Him in this ministry, He will abundantly provide you with all the help you can need."

He had also received the gift of counsel, to

resolve the difficulties of those who came to him for advice. Poor curates and others often came to consult him, or to complain of ill treatment. Now, though it often happened that they spoke in anger, he listened to them with the greatest patience; always having his heart raised to God, praying interiorly for him who spoke to him, that he might be enlightened, and prevented from offending his God by the unruly passions which agitated him. Then under the pretence of some business, he would go into his oratory to beg the assistance of our Lord, and after praying with many tears he would return, and give answers so just and conformable to the necessities of each, that he even astonished himself.

In his time, the greater part of the bishops of Castile passed through Valentia to go to the Council of Trent, and lodged with him on the way. He entered deeply into the necessities of the church, and told them, that though the principal object of the Council was to extirpate the new-born heresy in Germany, it was no less necessary to aim at a reformation of life and morals, so corrupt in all sorts of persons. He expressed great sorrow that he was not able to accompany them, on account of the many maladies with which he was afflicted. But the Saint, though he could not assist in body, endeavoured to be present in spirit, by the advice and counsels he gave, as to what ought to be done. He gave his proxy to the bishop of Nuesca, and gave to all some writings, exhorting them all to have confidence in our Lord of the good success of this holy Council, which He had promised.

One of these prelates returning some years after into Spain, said that the advice given by the archbishop concerning the Council, had been very well received by all the fathers; and that they had followed his opinion in every instance with two exceptions. The first was, that the Fathers of the Council should make a rule, that henceforth no bishop should be allowed to exchange his bishopric for another, in order that, hoping for nothing better than what he possessed, he might be more devoted to the care of the church to which God had called him. The second was, that all cures and benefices having the care of souls might be provided with priests natives of the place, providing they were well qualified, that fathers and mothers might be more careful to bring up their children to virtue and knowledge, in the hope of one day seeing them rectors and vicars in their own parishes. For though it might not be always possible, it would be especially advantageous in country churches; they would be better served, having a greater number of pious and learned priests.

This admirable gift of counsel was never more appreciated, than when death deprived the province of the services of S. Thomas. Every one exclaimed that his decease was still more to be lamented, on account of the loss of his advice and counsel, than the temporal alms which he gave to the poor, great and extensive though they were.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND THE POWER HE HAD RECEIVED FROM GOD OVER DEMONS.

Although the gift of prophecy and the power of driving devils from the bodies of men are not certain proofs of the holiness of him in whom they reside, since, according to scripture, there have been sinners and enemies of God who possessed them, yet it is certain, that where these gifts are joined to virtue and the observance of the divine commands, and it is seen plainly that the person in whom God has placed them seeks nothing else than His glory and the good of his fellow men, it is certain that they increase wonderfully the holiness of those who make a right use of them. Such was the case with our Saint. Our Lord gave him power over devils, and often revealed to him future things which it was impossible he should know in a natural way. Of several instances I will relate some of the most remarkable.

The holy prelate, as I have before said, mourned in the depths of his heart over the torrent of crimes and abominations with which the world was deluged; and wept before God continually, beseeching Him by His holy grace to remedy all these disorders. Now as it is most natural that the lips should utter the fervent desires of the heart, he often spoke on this subject to his

friends. One day, having celebrated mass with many tears and much devotion for the necessities of the Church, he said, on leaving the altar, to Dr. de la Porte, "Now let us praise God, and doubt no longer that He will soon provide for the wants of His Church, for I assure you that by His mercy He has revealed it to one of His servants." The next day a courier arrived at Valentia with letters from Pope Paul III. for the convocation of the council which the Saint earnestly desired as the best means of improving the condition of the holy Church.

Again: in the year 1552, the priests of the parish of S. Catherine of Valentia wished to get possession of the great chapel for their place of burial. The parishioners objected, saying, they had no right to it, and that it would be an injury to the public, as it was built by the alms of the parish. The difference was laid before the archbishop, who, after weighing the arguments on both sides, took the part of justice, and forbid the priests to take possession of the chapel. "Choose some other place in the church," said he, "for your place of burial, and leave this chapel; you will one day want it. Your church will be burnt, and you will then be glad that persons of fortune have had the chapel for their burying place, since, in gratitude for this privilege, they will contribute more than you could possibly do for the rebuilding of your church." Thirty-two years after, in the year 1584, the prophecy of the Saint was fulfilled. The church

was burnt to ashes, but the chapel received no injury.

A gentleman at the point of death was once recommended to the prayers of S. Thomas. He said mass for him, and on leaving the altar said to Dr. de la Porte, "Be comforted, your friend will not die. Go and tell him that a physician named Aguilar will know his complaint, and that by his advice and remedies he will recover his health."

One of his friends, a merchant, had communicated to him his intention of marrying one of his daughters, and recommended the affair to his prayers; but without awaiting the Saint's answer he married her, and returned soon afterwards with a joyful countenance, expressing his satisfaction at the alliance. "You are pleased at this marriage," said the Saint, "and I am sorry for it. You begged me to recommend this affair to God. I have done so; and if you had returned to me as you ought, I should have told you not to conclude it. After your death this marriage will be the ruin of your house; your daughter will be miserable, and will pass the rest of her days in sorrow." It happened exactly as he had predicted.

Another friend, who came to tell him with great joy that his wife had given birth to a son, was answered with these words: "Pray for the mother and the child. He will die in a few years of a violent and disastrous death, which will try you much." This happened also. For when the child advanced in years, he gave himself up to a dissolute life, and was killed in an encounter

with an evil companion, his father being entirely ruined by a lawsuit to revenge his death.

The power he had received from our Lord over devils was not less remarkable than his gift of prophecy: for the Divine Goodness is accustomed to confer these graces and favours on the humble of heart, as if He would recompense their humility by lowering the pride of the devils in subjecting them to the will of the saints and the truly humble. There was once so terrible a tempest in the city of Burgos, where the Saint was superior, that the winds, accompanied by thunder and whirlwinds, overthrew some houses, and injured a great many others. S. Thomas immediately went to pray before his crucifix, and while praying our Lord revealed to him the cause of this agitation in the air. He climbed the steeple, and throwing his eyes around he perceived a number of devils, under the form of different animals, who caused these whirlwinds and storms. Having commanded them in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to depart, they obeyed, and left the air serene and tranquil. Another time, also at Burgos, they brought a demoniac into the church of the convent. The Saint did not at first release him; but the demon dared not, in his presence, torment the poor man, nor make his ordinary grimaces.

One morning, having sent all his religious to pray in the chapel of the Holy Crucifix, he led in the possessed, who seemed to dart fire and flames from his eyes and mouth, so great was his fury. He was instantly delivered, the devil going out

of this poor body with horrible howlings, with no further injury to it than leaving it extremely weak. The Saint gave thanks to God for his deliverance, and then turning to his religious, said, "Fathers and brethren, I have convoked you here for two reasons. Because, in the first place, I know the power of united prayer; and in the second, I considered that if our Lord has done this wonder, and shown His mercy on account of the merits of some one amongst us, he, whoever he may be, will be saved from the danger of vain-glory and presumption, to which he might otherwise be exposed."

In the general visitation that S. Thomas made of his diocese the first year of his archiepiscopate, they brought to him at Alcoy, a girl possessed by so outrageous a devil, that neither exorcisms nor the other means that the church usually employs on such occasions, had any effect. The holy prelate prayed to God for her; and after mass which he celebrated one Saturday with that intention, he ordered the vicar of the parish the next day at Prone, to discover before the people all that he had seen and heard of this demon; and also what the Saint had said to him in private about him. "And be sure," said he, "that he will soon abandon this poor creature, because as he is an extremely proud and haughty spirit, and imagines we do not know his stratagems, he will be confounded when he sees that we know and publish his weakness." The next day all was done as he desired, and the girl was cured. He also delivered by his prayers a young

lady of Valentia, who had been possessed for a long time, without those about her being able to discover whether it was by a good or an evil spirit. A doctor named Halaya, to whom they brought her to confess, discovered by very evident marks that it was the devil who spoke by her mouth; yet he only laughed at him, and did not cease tormenting her even in his presence. At last they brought her to the archbishop. He made her come into the church, and after having prayed and said mass for her, she was perfectly cured.

CHAPTER V.

OF HIS HUMILITY AFTER HE BECAME ARCHBISHOP.

THE holy fathers who treat of prayer, say, that it is a virtue which pierces heaven; and that to soar on high it makes use of two other virtues as wings, Faith and Humility. By the light of faith, we discover how powerful and merciful God is, in relieving our necessities, and loading us with benefits; and by humility, we see our own misery and helplessness, and we hasten to throw ourselves into the arms of His goodness and clemency.

The connexion between prayer and humility, naturally leads me to carry on the history of S. Thomas, by treating in this chapter of his humility, having spoken in a former one of his gift of prayer. In all the states through which

he passed before his elevation to the episcopal throne, he had always preserved sentiments of deep and genuine humility; but after entering the prelacy, the depth and intensity of those feelings increased. He always believed himself unworthy of the high ministry to which our Lord had called him. The sweetness and affability with which he treated every one, testified that he knew how to practise the saying of the wise man, "Be so much the more mild and humble when raised to a higher dignity." The poor and the rich were admitted equally to his house. And without making exception to any one, he accommodated all according to the state and quality of each. He had no porter as was then the custom; the man at his door was merely kept that he might be informed more quickly when he was wanted by any one, whether at study or prayer. At his house there were no anti-chambers and cabinets to be passed through, before reaching his presence. The doors were closed only at night; the whole of the day they were left open, that all those who wished it might have access to him at any hour. His house was always crowded with the poor, the old, the blind, and the needy, who came to tell him of their troubles and their miseries. Instead of avoiding the visits of these poor people, he received them with so much kindness and humanity, that to show his affection, and to give them more freedom and confidence, he seated them near himself, conversing amiably with them to put them at their ease. Never did he show the least disgust,

however poor and ragged they might be, and he often remained with them for hours, comforting them, and exhorting them to bear with patience their anguish and their griefs. Sometimes it happened that the poor entering his hall, and not knowing him on account of his mean attire, would ask him if Dr. de la Porte was in his room, that they might go there to receive their alms. This person was his Visitor, and the principal distributor of his alms. "Wait a moment, my friends," he would say, "I will go directly and call him." And then he would go and tell the doctor that the poor waited for him, and beg him to go quickly and attend to them with love and charity. His heart was so tender and full of goodness, that he could not see any one in affliction without being sensibly touched. And even when at table, if he remembered having seen any one cast down or sad, he would rise and not return till he had entirely consoled him, considering so charitable an action as the most exquisite dish of his repast.

There are three things which are certain effects of the virtue of humility. The first is, the not discarding or looking down upon one's poor relations when one is raised above them, and not blushing if they are in a mean and contemptible situation of life. The second is, to fly whatever savours of pomp and ostentation; and the third to grant requests with facility, and easily to accept excuses and reasons which are offered, as well on account of the esteem the truly humble man feels for others, as the low

opinion he entertains of himself. These three effects of humility were wonderfully united in our holy prelate. His origin was low, as I have before said, and though his father was well enough off, it is certain that he had a number of relations who were poor. But he never despised them for their poverty. On the contrary, neither dazzled with the splendour of the episcopal dignity, nor the high estimation in which he was held throughout the world; he was always pleased to entertain them in his house, and was desirous they should all call him their relation. One day when he was on important business with the bishops of Tortosa and Segovia, an uncle of his arrived at his house, with a linen apron hung from his neck after the fashion of the peasants of Castile. He showed much joy at seeing him, and saluted him warmly in the presence of his company. "You are welcome, uncle," said he, "be seated. Their lordships will excuse my asking news of my mother and relations." He spoke to him with so much sweetness and affability, that the spectators were not less edified than surprised with his holy simplicity. Then he called his steward to entrust him to his care, saying, "Go and rest yourself, uncle, as soon as I have finished here you shall see me." Then turning towards the bishops, he told them that this was his uncle, the brother of his mother. Another time a cousin-german came to Valentia, not so much to see and visit the archbishop, as to obtain from him a sum of money. He received this cousin with the same affability and

kindly welcome, and kept him nearly a month in his house, and then inquired into the state of his affairs. "They are bad enough," replied the man, "since of two oxen that I possessed, one is dead, so that I am obliged to stop my work." "Ah well," said the Saint, "I will give you enough to buy another, not in consideration of my relationship, but to assist you in the extremity of your affairs. I give this on condition you ask nothing more of me, because what I have is not my own, nor have I any right to enrich my relations with it, but it is entrusted to my care to help the poor." Similar meetings often took place with relations whom he loved and caressed. But he never forgot the rules which justice and charity required in the distribution of the ecclesiastical revenues.

He abhorred also whatever in the least partook of pomp and grandeur. There would be no end to the relation of what he has said and written on this subject. In his house every thing bore the stamp of simplicity and poverty. But his desire of leading an entirely apostolic life, was especially seen in his public appearances, when he would not allow a throne to be raised for him, nor a carpet to be spread under his feet in the church. The first time that he preached in his cathedral, he endured with difficulty the piece of brocade with which the pulpit was dressed on his account; and on leaving it he strictly prohibited the sacristan from ever again dressing it for him, but to let it remain as it was usually for others. And although Don

Jerome Carros d' Estavo, vicar general of the chapter, entreated that for the honour of the Church and his own dignity, the pulpit might be dressed when he preached, he could never obtain his request, excepting that he allowed him to hang on a corner of it some small piece of embroidery, from which he might draw instruction for the people. At the solemn festivals when he celebrated pontifically, he was never vested sitting; nor was he pleased at seeing around him so many servants and ministers; but preferred that the sacristian should assist him to vest as he did the other priests. Nothing could be more poor and simple than his usual ornaments. All the enrichment of his chapel consisted in some old painted linen, and except the alb and amice which he had, he was obliged to borrow from the cathedral whatever was necessary for the celebration of the sacrifice when he wished to say mass. He had recourse also to the cathedral for the cross and chalice. His mitre was of plain white damask, without any ornament. In his visitations he generally used whatever he found in the parish churches, however poor and shabby they might be. However, it is certain, that his not being provided with the ornaments that other prelates possessed, arose neither from avarice nor carelessness. He whom our Lord had endowed with so rare a judgment and singular virtues could be guilty of neither. But he deprived himself of these things in favour of the poor, on whom he bestowed all that he thus saved. Joined to this

consideration, came in his vow of poverty and his extreme love of humility. Now it happened by a special providence of God, that what in others gave rise to contempt, was in his case a subject of edification, and a powerful motive for increased reverence, to those who saw his sweetness and affability in so elevated a position.

The third effect of humility which I mentioned was beyond everything perfect and admirable in this Saint. He treated his priests with much honour and respect, appearing to forget he was their superior. When discoursing with them he would insist upon their not standing, but would seat them close to his side, and listen to them in a most amiable manner, frequently preferring their opinions to his own. When he reproved them he often begged their forgiveness, if he feared he had pressed them too hard with his remonstrances.

Having once heard a very sad account of one of his canons, who was in reality a man of probity, but who had enemies who were so much the more dangerous as they appeared wise and moderate, he summoned him before him, and reproved him very severely. But no sooner had the canon justified himself, and clearly made out his own innocence and the malignity of his enemies, than the Saint embraced him, and said, "May God comfort you, as you have comforted me by what you tell me! Pardon me, I entreat you; for I assure you that if I were at liberty to name the persons who have so deceived me, you would

judge as I did, that they were worthy of credit." A complaint was also made against another canon, who was in reality guilty. The mildness and benignity of the holy archbishop shone forth brightly in this instance. Having fully informed himself of the facts of the case, and seeing no amendment, he judged it proper, in order not to connive at vice, to call him into his presence. He showed him his fault, and the scandal it produced, and entreated him to correct himself and amend his life, and thus spare his archbishop the pain of correcting him. The canon, instead of profiting from this remonstrance and charitable advice, flew into a rage, and said, that being a member of the Holy Office, he was not amenable to him, nor would he recognise him as judge, with many other inconsiderate words. To so great a height did he carry his impertinence, that one of the domestics wished to arrest him, but the mild and gentle prelate would not allow him. "Let him depart," said he, "it is not his fault; it is I who have been wrong in giving the occasion of it by my remonstrances against what he has done, which were a little too rough." However, the officers of the Inquisition heard of the offence their coadjutor had committed, and put him in prison, judging that they could not let it pass with impunity, without injury to the love and respect they bore the Saint. They dispatched a messenger to the archbishop, informing him that if he thought good they would send the criminal to him, to be chastised as he thought proper, otherwise they were resolved to punish

him as he deserved. The holy prelate, who was just sitting down to table when the message arrived, was so sensibly affected, that he went immediately to the Inquisition, beseeching the Inquisitors to release him instantly, assuring them that it was he who had given cause to what had passed. He was so earnest with them, that he protested he would not leave them till they gave up the prisoner into his hands. At length he gained his end, and to show his joy, like the good shepherd who has found his lost sheep, he embraced him with tenderness, and shed many tears over him. Then having to return to his house, he wished to have his company through the town, that by his familiar and friendly manner towards him he might stifle the rumours which were already abroad of his imprisonment, on account of his having insulted the archbishop; and also that his honour and reputation might be preserved in the estimation of those who saw them conversing thus together.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. THOMAS HAD NO RESPECT OF PERSONS. OF HIS CONTEMPT FOR ALL CREATED THINGS. OF HIS EVANGELICAL LIBERTY.

It sometimes happens that mildness and humility are rather the effects of a natural weakness and low-mindedness, than a true virtue of the soul. This is easily discovered when a want of resolution in resisting evil is seen. True hu-

mility, which is not a weakness of nature, but a holy and admirable virtue, can bear to be abased, and to give up its own interest to that of another, when the glory of God or the good of a fellow creature requires it; while at the same time it knows how to act with courage and firmness when it is expedient and right to do so. To show that what has been already said of the humility of S. Thomas in all his actions, could not be looked upon as the effect of natural meanness, but proceeded from true virtue as its principle and proper origin. It must be made clear how free he was from all inordinate affection to relations, friends, wealth, honours, and all sorts of human considerations, that he might preserve himself in that high and holy liberty of mind of which he made such admirable use on every occasion in which he was engaged by the duties of his charge. Though his respect and tender affection for his mother were so great, he never allowed her more than a hundred crowns a year, until she became aged, when remembering that at his solicitation she had deprived herself of all her wealth to enrich the poor, he knew she must require more assistance in her infirmities. He gave two hundred crowns a year to each of his brothers, and forty to his uncle, because they had families which they were unable to support without this alms. The Saint once sent a domestic named Gabriel Trovado, to inquire after his mother. She charged him expressly to say to her son, that he should remember she was mother of an

archbishop, and that the hundred crowns he paid her yearly was not sufficient to support so many poor who came to lodge in her house, which she still kept for that purpose. However, she could never obtain anything more from him. "I have," said he, "sent my mother what I know is necessary for the support of her house. If she were here, I might see what I could do. As it is I give her sufficient to live conformably to the customs of the country, and to her condition. If she wishes to give more to the poor than I send her, I cannot help her, since the revenues of the archbishopric of Valentia belong to the poor of Valentia, and I should act against my conscience in distributing them to others."

His brothers used often to complain also, that he did not take into consideration the size of their families in his small allowance, and begged him to increase it. He refused them also; and to induce them to labour and manage their affairs with prudence, he told them at once and decidedly, that they had nothing more to hope for from him. His other relations who solicited his charity he treated in exactly the same manner, giving them just what was necessary, as he did others, and no more. One day he showed much displeasure towards a nephew who had come to inform him of his daughter's marriage with a doctor. From the inequality of rank, he could not approve this alliance, and spoke very strongly to the father on the subject. "What!" said he several times, "the daughter of a peasant to a man of letters! you have done wrong." His

treasurer who was present, to appease him, and at the same time to please the father who was confused and astonished, said, "It seems to me there is not so great a disparity between the parties. The daughter of the nephew of an archbishop deserves at least some advantage. And then it is very easy to remedy all the rest by adding to her dowry whatever your Lordship may think proper." "God forbid," said the good prelate, "that I should ever commit such a fault. The revenues of bishops are not given them to enrich their relations, but to assist the poor." He then commanded him to give his nephew fifty crowns. "Take this, nephew," said he, "it will suffice for the expenses of your journey; but expect nothing more from me. What I have is not mine, but belongs to the poor of my diocese."

Two other relations went to spend the festival of Christmas with him, to offer him the good wishes of the season, and also hoping to obtain some gift from him. But they were disappointed. For though he received them with joy and a hearty welcome, yet he gave them only what was just necessary to defray all their travelling expenses. One of the two told him he was greatly in want of a mule for labour; he gave him the money, but for fear he should spend it in any other way, he made him buy the mule before he set out. He treated in the same manner one of his relations who came with the intention of remaining in his service. He received him with affection and affability, kept him some time in

his house, and then dismissed him, giving him what was necessary to take him back to his own country, and nothing more. Some marks of dissatisfaction appeared in the behaviour of this man. "How!" said the Saint to him, "does it seem to you that I have given you but little? Do you not know that I shall be called to account by God if I dare to deprive the poor of what belongs to them? Certainly I should have given you nothing if I had not known that you needed wherewith to carry you home. Go then, and return no more with the idea that I shall ever enrich you, remembering that whatever I possess does not belong to me, but to the poor of the province."

As the holy archbishop was entirely free from all inordinate affection to his relations, so was he also free from consideration to rank or any other human distinction. Nothing ever induced him to lower his character by a base condescension or cowardly compliance; nor was he ever known to flatter any one, or offer a useless compliment. He had received from our Blessed Lord an admirable freedom of spirit. His heart was great and generous, and filled with that apostolic vigour which S. Paul desired for his son Timothy. When at Valladolid he never paid visits to the emperor. He was only seen at court three or four times, and even then he had been brought there by charity for the salvation of some miserable beings. Though he was the emperor's preacher, and was often solicited by the lords of his suite to visit him, and who assured him of

his majesty's esteem and affection, yet he always declined, saying that his majesty had so much to occupy him, and those such weighty affairs, that he ought not to be approached unnecessarily; and that whenever he should do him the honour to command his services, he would always find him ready and willing to obey him.

This rule of not visiting the court he kept so strictly, that having gone from Burgos, where he was prior, to Valladolid to preach the Lent there before the emperor, he returned without speaking to him or paying him any compliment, because no occasion of charity had drawn him into his presence. The emperor was so anxious not to lose one of his sermons while he was at Valladolid, that he gave orders to be informed whenever he preached at the convent. One Sunday that he was going to preach, the emperor arrived a little before the time, and going into the cloisters, he found the sacristan there. "Go," said he, "and tell the father prior that I am here." The sacristan went, and the Saint returned this answer, "Tell his majesty I am preparing to go into the pulpit. If he commands me to come to him I shall not be able to preach; but if he wishes me to preach, he must excuse my coming to him." The sacristan acquitted himself of his commission, not without fear of displeasing the emperor by an answer which seemed to him not very civil. However, his majesty received it in very good part, and in a manner which showed his entire satisfaction, he said to those around him, "I wish all religious

were like this good father, and that they had no more respect of persons than he has."

About this time there arose a question among the learned in Castile; and the casuists were consulted as to whether a certain thing could conscientiously be introduced into the kingdom, which would seem to lead in the end to the injury of the public, and perhaps be the entire ruin of the people. The Saint, who was advised of this, felt obliged, in order to prevent the evil, to speak of it publicly before the emperor, finding that no one came forward to induce the council to reject it. Preaching then one day in his presence at Valladolid, he began in these words, "May I entreat your majesty to command that curtain to be undrawn? because having to address you individually, you will do me a great favour if you will allow me to see your countenance, that I may the better say what I wish." The emperor immediately ordered the curtain to be undrawn. "Sacred majesty," said the Saint, "I have been requested to tell you my judgment on a certain affair treated of in your council. I have but one word to say to your majesty, which is, most humbly to beseech you to consider with your usual zeal and prudence what are the characters of the persons who make this proposition, and who dare to charge themselves with an affair which is viewed with horror by all the wise, and all those who have any religious feelings." After a few more words uttered with great power, he concluded thus, "I have nothing more to say upon this subject.

If your majesty pleases, you can command the curtain to be drawn." This liberty of speech astonished the audience, but it edified the emperor marvellously; who instead of being offended, approved it, and the high opinion he had formed of the preacher's sanctity was increased by it. From this we may judge what S. Thomas would do in reproving ordinary persons when archbishop, since he could speak in this manner to so great a monarch, while only a simple religious.

He received with civility the numerous letters written to him by princes and lords, and answered them with the same civility. But when asked to do any thing which was not just and right, he added without ceremony that he should be most happy to serve them, but it was impossible to comply with their request, without breaking the laws of God, which it was not permitted him to do.

I could relate numberless instances of his strength of mind and generosity, if I did not fear being wearisome, for which reason I will cut this subject short by relating a circumstance which occurred between him and the emperor on an occasion no less remarkable than the preceding. News having reached Spain that the Turks were going to attack the island of Ivizza, the islanders sent deputies to the emperor entreating him to build them a citadel. This demand was granted, but not so quickly executed for want of finances. As the emperor had no resources in Spain, he was advised to apply to the archbishop of Va-

lentia, for the loan of twenty thousand crowns. The Saint replied to the deputies of the island, and the imperial commissaries, that he humbly begged his majesty to excuse him; that he had nothing belonging to himself, nor could he lend him any thing, the revenues of the archbishop being the property of the poor, and not his own. After some discussion the officers begged him to consider the great need they had of this money, which was destined to be applied to the common good of Christianity, and again asked him on what conditions he would oblige them. "I quite understand the necessity of the case," said the good prelate, "but yet I cannot do it; because God has not placed the island of Ivizza under my care, as he has the diocese of Valentia. It is not just to use for the fortifications of Ivizza money which is intended for the relief of the poor, whose prayers to God constitute the principal strength of states and empires." In short, he refused their demand, knowing it would be acting contrary to the will of God and the duties of his charge. They then began to tell him how much displeased the emperor would be at his refusal and his resolute answers. "I should grieve," said he, "to give his majesty reason to be offended with me, but it would be much worse for me to offend God. But if unhappily his majesty is offended, here is the key of my cell, which I carry still at my girdle. And I assure you that I should very much prefer returning there to live and die than to continue in a palace. And touching what you say as to

the compassion I ought to feel towards this poor country, God knows I would contribute to its preservation against the infidels, at the price of my blood. But let us see what can be done. His majesty demands twenty thousand crowns. I cannot give them without injury to the poor; but let the sum be divided, and I will lend his majesty ten thousand on condition he assigns me that sum by a secure bond to be returned at a certain time, otherwise I can do nothing without loading my conscience with a thing for which I shall be accountable one day to God." The agreement was made in this manner. He lent the ten thousand crowns, of which he received six thousand during his life, and the other four were paid afterwards, and employed in works of charity according to the orders he left at his death, as will be seen in its proper place. See how our Saint could unite gentleness and humility with firmness of mind, when he thought it necessary.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE CARE HE TOOK OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND THE CHARITY WITH WHICH HE TREATED ALL THOSE UNDER HIS JURISDICTION.

HAVING undertaken in this chapter to show with what prudence and charity this good pastor governed the flock entrusted to him, it is fitting to begin by examining his way of conducting his

own house, since, as the apostle says, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

The method which S. Thomas adopted in his household was perfectly pious and christian. One of his rules was, never to receive any one into his service without speaking with him himself, and being careful to obtain informaton of his life and morals, at the same time making him thoroughly understand what he required from him, and what would be his employment. He afterwards prescribed certain rules, of which the four following were the most important: In the first place he was expected to live in peace with every one; and for this object he forbade any of his servants to meddle with the affairs of others, but to confine his attention strictly to what concerned himself; and, secondly, he enjoined them to be modest and very retired. He never allowed those in his employ, whoever they were, to go out without his express permission, treating them in this respect as if they had been in a monastery. All the doors of his house were closed before night, so that no one could possibly go out even if he had had the inclination. His third rule was, that they were never to repeat anything of others, either to him or any one else. Lastly and principally, he enjoined them to be devout, never to fail at prayers, to frequent the Sacraments, to confess and communicate at the solemn festivals, and every first Sunday in the month, and to recite daily the little office of the Virgin; or, if they could not read, the Rosary. If he discover-

ed that any of them had failed in his duty, he called him to him and corrected him as a father, regarding them all as his children. He particularly showed his paternal affection and charity when they were sick, causing them to be attended with more care than in a similar case he would have allowed them to bestow on himself.

But as he knew the soul to be much more noble than the body, so did he bestow much more care upon the health of their souls than their bodies. From time to time he assembled them all together, and though he had two almoners capable of instructing them, yet he taught them himself, and gave them spiritual lessons in form of conferences; encouraging some and reproving others, and all with words so gentle and yet powerful, that they were led to their duty rather by love than fear. In addition to their wages he occasionally gratified them by something extraordinary. A servant of his, called Philip Jovier, having once received from him fifty crowns more than his due, wished to express his gratitude to his good master. "Take that, my son," said the kind prelate, "it is not in my power to give you more at present, for I am in debt to my treasurer, but continue to conduct yourself well, and I will endeavour for the future to be more liberal towards you." In his house experience justified the truth of the proverb, that the good master makes the good servant. For the holy archbishop had so formed his domestics after his own example, that there was amongst them no other ambition than that of attaining

to virtue. Complaints, murmurings, tale-bearings or detractions, were never heard in his house.

As detraction was a sin which the Saint held in especial horror, if he found himself in company with persons who spoke disadvantageously of others, he always defended the cause of the absent, and endeavoured to do away with the unfavourable impression raised against them. "You do not look at this in a right point of view," he would say, "you are wrong, because he may have had a good intention; as for myself, I believe that he had." He was once asked by some poor miserable creature, to go and obtain of the emperor a favour. As soon as he entered the ante-chamber, all the lords who were in waiting, rose to do him honour, though he was at that time but a simple religious. Having prevailed on him to be seated, one of them began to speak of an absent person. The Saint, who soon perceived to what his discourse tended, interrupted him, and said, rising at the same time, "Sir, I humbly entreat you either to change this subject or permit me to retire, because if you continue any longer, I see clearly that God will be displeased." Being at this moment summoned to the emperor, he was no sooner gone, than the constable of Castile, who was there, said to the others, "Truly, gentlemen, Father Thomas is a religious everywhere, as much at court as in the cloister; no respect of men will prevent him from being so, wherever he is."

We will now speak of the love and charity he

felt universally for all who depended on him, and who lived under his jurisdiction in his diocese. The good archbishop entered so completely into their afflictions, and so tenderly compassionated them under their sorrows, that he passed the greater part of the night in his oratory, at the foot of the crucifix, beseeching our blessed Lord to grant the petitions which had been recommended to him the preceding day. And like another Jacob, he never quitted the holy struggle with God till he had received the blessing and the relief he had implored for his poor brethren. It is commonly said, that the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart; this axiom is true principally in persons who are humble, sincere, and without guile, such as was this great servant of God. At table, in the evenings, and in fact whenever he was with his friends, he scarcely discoursed on any other subject than the means which could be found to remedy the wants of his people. "I beg of you as a favour," said he one day to Dr. de la Porte, "to comfort this poor man a little;" and at another time, "Let me recommend to you the wants and distresses of that poor widow." Such words as these were constantly on his lips, suggested by his fatherly care. He never showed the least sign of impatience, nor felt himself importuned by the number and assiduity of the poor people who had recourse to him incessantly. There was no time nor hour in which they were not at liberty to go to him. His charity towards his neighbour was so great, that he could conceive no evil to be without a remedy,

nor any infirmity to be incurable. All his people had orders never to send any one away, to be affable to every one, and to call him to the first who inquired for him, telling them it was all his pleasure and consolation in this world to see his poor sheep run thus to their shepherd.

When the hospital, which had been destroyed by fire, was rebuilding, the good archbishop went almost every day to hasten the work; and solicited the men to labour hard, with so much zeal and earnestness, that one would have thought all the sick and poor had been his own brethren. On his first arrival in Valentia, he took the bread as it were from his own mouth to feed them, giving them the four thousand crowns with which he had been provided for his own necessities; and immediately he received his revenues as archbishop, he sent a part to the hospital to advance the building; besides which he did not cease to recommend it to the charity of his auditors in all his sermons. He felt for all and each who gave alms to the hospital the same gratitude and obligation as he would have done if they had relieved his own necessities. Like the high-priest Aaron, who carried the names of the children of Israel written upon his shoulders and breast, this holy prelate carried his people in his heart and bore them on his shoulders, by supporting their infirmities and imperfections, and charitably providing for their miseries. His compassion for those who had fallen into sin was unbounded, as well as his zeal and gentleness in recovering them from it. He hated sin, but loved those to whose

amendment he was instrumental. The souls that he drew from the gates of hell to those of heaven were so numerous, and there were so many persons who renounced their sinful courses and dedicated themselves entirely to the service of God, that he who would undertake to give an account of them might fill volumes with this one subject alone. He spared neither labour, nor tears, nor blood, nor money, when necessary to save a soul; and sometimes he even yielded his rights, and declined exercising his authority, when expedient to do so for the same object. I will relate some examples of this. In one of the parish churches of Valentia, the choir having finished chanting the office one Good Friday, a certain priest who was standing at the altar where the Blessed Sacrament had been brought from the sepulchre, for what reason the history does not relate, fell into a passion, and called out and blasphemed in a horrible manner, to the great scandal of all who were assisting. The holy archbishop, who was informed of this outrage, called him into his presence, and reproved him with all the rigour that his offence deserved, intending to punish him severely. But no sooner did he witness his repentance, his deep sorrow and tears, than he said to him, "You know well that your blasphemy, joined to the scandal you have given, demand an exemplary punishment, and in truth, I was resolved, in accordance with my duty, to chastise you as you deserve; nevertheless I pardon you, since you see and acknowledge your fault, and in imitation of our merciful Lord, who

receives the sinner when he weeps and detests his crime, I will treat you with mildness. During three days you will fast and give alms to the poor of your parish, that they may pray to God for you; and as your fault has been public and scandalous, go into the church and be seen in the choir, but abstain from saying mass for fifteen days, that those who have witnessed the sin may also see that it is only as a penitent you dare to approach our Lord, after having so grossly offended Him at His holy altar."

Another time he was touched to the quick by an account that a layman brought him of an ecclesiastic, whom he accused of improper intercourse with a woman, and even of being the father of three children. Nevertheless, wishing to preserve his honour, the good archbishop defended him in such a way, that the accuser said to him, "Certainly, my lord, your goodness must be very great, since you defend even the wicked against justice." Without being piqued by this reproach, after having made inquiries to ascertain the truth of the affair, he dismissed his visitor, and sent for the priest into his oratory, and there gave him so severe a reproof, that in spite of his attachment to the woman, and the pledge of their sacrilegious love, he protested that for the future all intercourse with her should cease. The Saint, who was over-joyed at seeing him so well disposed, confirmed him in his good resolutions, and to deprive him of the means of returning to his sinful course, he provided a husband for the woman, and took charge

of the children; and when they were grown up he provided for the two boys, and gave the girl so good a dowry, that she married respectably, as well as the mother.

Having learnt also that two other priests led bad lives he summoned them separately into his oratory, after having for a long time supplicated the Almighty to touch their hearts, and there reproved them with so much zeal and effect, that they at once resolved to renounce their bad practices. For this purpose they for some time left the town to bewail their sins in solitude, and to prepare themselves to make an entire confession of their past lives; and both of them ever afterwards led strictly penitential lives. And when the good prelate learned that poverty had been the occasion of their fall, he assigned to each of them an annual pension, and at the same time gave their two accomplices a dowry, which placed them in a situation to marry honestly, and to serve God henceforth in the observance of the laws of holy matrimony.

Another priest was brought to him by the archers, who had taken him in the night, armed and dressed in an extravagant manner quite unbecoming his profession. They expected the Saint would immediately order him to prison, instead of which he desired them to leave him in his house, saying, "Be satisfied that I will pay what is due to you for your capture, the rest is my concern; it belongs to me to settle matters with this person." He then caused a bed to be prepared in his chamber, as soon as the archers

were gone, and made him lie down, whilst he retired into his oratory to lay open his heart before God, and represent to Him this piteous spectacle; with burning tears conjuring His Divine Goodness not to permit the Blood which He had shed for this poor unhappy being, to have been shed in vain. After a long and fervent prayer he returned to the priest, and began to reprove and exhort him in words so powerful and full of the Spirit of God, that this man, who seemed to have lost all fear and compunction for his fault, seeing the excessive charity of his holy prelate, returned to his senses, made a firm resolution to change his life, and to employ what remained of it in the service of God, by a holy and perfect penitence. At break of day the Saint took leave of him with these words, "Return to your house, my brother, return at once, and never forget the great mercy God has shown you this day. This is all the punishment I award you." The heart of the priest was truly changed, so that he made a full reparation by the holiness of his life for all the evil he had caused by his bad example. To avoid a wearisome repetition I will now dismiss this subject, only saying that the number, both of ecclesiastics and laymen, that he brought by such means as these from vice to virtue, from hell to heaven, is almost beyond belief.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEQUEL OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS HE OBTAINED BY THE SEVERE DISCIPLINES HE USED.

As it is usual for most men to form their judgment of things, not as they are in reality, but according to their individual bias and disposition, I will here relate some instances to prove, that what has been already said of the piety of S. Thomas of Villanova, did not proceed from pusillanimity or deficiency of zeal for the glory of God and the maintenance of the archiepiscopal rights.

A canon of his cathedral having been arrested by the governor of Valentia, John de Villeraze, for having seriously hurt one of his officers, the chapter, who were greatly concerned at this, exerted themselves to the utmost to obtain his release. But finding their efforts useless, they had recourse to the archbishop, imploring him to spare them this ignominy, and to exert his authority in behalf of their brother. He replied, that he was deeply grieved at this accident, and wished it were in his power to act, and to spare their companion such a disgrace, but that his hands were tied by the concordat they had made on his arrival; so that it was useless for them to call upon him to protect a person who was exempted, by their privileges, from his jurisdiction.

This answer afflicted them to the last degree, and fearing that whilst they were losing time in soliciting one and another for the criminal, justice might proceed to his condemnation by a definitive sentence, they offered to submit themselves to the archbishop's jurisdiction during his life, and passed a public act to that effect. In consequence of which the Saint sent immediately to inform the prisoner, and began to proceed by the way of ecclesiastical censures against the governor, and continued with the greater firmness on account of a black and most unworthy action committed soon after by the same man against a subdeacon. This young ecclesiastic having unfortunately killed a man in the bull-fights, which were the usual diversions in Spain at the time of the Carnival, he dragged him to prison, and there, without any judicial process, caused him to be strangled and his body cast into the town with the cord still around his neck, every one trembling with horror and dismay at the sight of so barbarous a spectacle.

The generous archbishop finding that after two or three remonstrances, the governor still refused to give up his canon, cut him off with all his adherents from the communion of the faithful, by the greater excommunication, and at the same time caused an interdict to be published throughout the city, where the churches were closed and the divine offices ceased, according to the usual practice on such occasions in Spain, and sometimes in cases of less importance. The interdiction lasted several months,

notwithstanding all the viceroy's efforts to oblige the archbishop to raise it. To his entreaties he joined threats of seizing the temporals of his church, and employed all his power against him, that what he would not grant by fair means he might be compelled to do by force. The Saint, firm as a rock, sent this answer to the viceroy's menaces: "To be faithful to your king, your excellence is obliged to maintain his authority by every just and reasonable means against those who would weaken it. In like manner, seeing the wrong done to the Church, it is my duty to defend it with the arms that God has placed in my hands, unless I would wish to pass for, and to be, a cowardly and mercenary pastor. And as to the revenues of the archbishopric that you threaten to seize, *I* shall not be the loser by your performing your threat, but the poor, to whom they belong. And I ask for nothing better, than to be discharged from the burden of the prelacy, to return to the life of a simple religious in his cell. And finally, I should esteem myself happy, not only to lose my property but my life, in protecting the Church that God has given me." At length the viceroy, judging by these concluding words, animated by an ardent and apostolic zeal, that the holy prelate would relax nothing of his resolution, and considering also that he was in the right, sent orders to the governor that he was to submit to his pastor. The canon was released on the Saturday before Palm Sunday; the governor acknowledged his fault, and humbly received and per-

formed his penance. The third day after Easter, the archbishop from the pulpit explained to the people what had passed, protesting that it was not without much grief on his part, that the interdict had lasted so long; but that he could not raise it whilst the honour of the Church was concerned. With respect to their governor, who had been the cause of this disorder, he told them he was not the less Christian or Catholic for having thus resisted the ecclesiastical censures, seeing he had thought he could do so lawfully; added to which, he had obeyed the viceroy, and humbly submitted himself to the Church.

But the holy archbishop never employed these violent remedies except in extreme cases. He loved rather to shed his tears and his blood before God for the salvation of the souls committed to him, and to punish himself for the sins of his flock by severe disciplines, than by exerting his authority to force them to their duty by means which would cost him less, if he had chosen to avail himself of the power of his office. His charity had ample room to exercise itself, for libertinism and dissoluteness of manners had in his time arrived almost at their utmost height in the greater number of those who were consecrated to God. Having been informed that a certain ecclesiastic, whom he had several times reproved for his bad conduct, still continued to scandalize the world by his immoralities, he sent for him to his house; and taking him privately into his oratory, he laid before

him, in a forcible manner, the miserable state in which he lived, and the pernicious example his depraved morals gave to every one; showing him at the same time the punishment which his crimes deserved. "However," said he, "as it is perhaps my clemency which has fomented your debauchery, and as it seems to me you have continued your disorderly life only because I have delayed to punish you, I resolve to bear the penalty myself." So saying, he prostrated himself before a crucifix, and began severely to discipline his body, which he had half uncovered, and continued this rigour until the guilty man could no longer suffer the remorse of his conscience, and terrified at seeing this proof of the excessive charity of his good prelate, threw himself at his feet, saying, "My Lord, cease, in the name of God. Give me that discipline, I beseech you, that I may expiate my sins by my own blood, not by the effusion of yours. Why should the innocent suffer for the guilty? No, I promise you, in the presence of this adorable crucifix, so entirely to change my life and manners, that for the future you shall be perfectly satisfied with me. And for what is past I ask no favour from your goodness. Treat me according to the most rigorous justice. Impose on me what penance you shall think proper, for there is nothing that I will not do, by the grace of God, to satisfy Him for my offences." The Saint embraced him tenderly, and praised God in his heart for the impression he had just made upon this poor miserable man. To fortify him in his pious reso-

lution, he made him an exhortation so affectionate and so full of the Spirit of God, that he went from his presence, his eyes bathed in tears, and for six months remained struck with astonishment, and unable to recover the natural expression of his countenance. The rest of his days were passed in the service of God and His church in a most exemplary holiness of life.

The Saint met with many other similar occasions, where, in order to succeed and obtain the object of his desire, the conversion of souls, he spared nothing. He never esteemed his money better or more usefully employed than when given as alms to poor ecclesiastics, to support them respectably according to their condition. At one time, having met with one whose guilt was caused by his poverty, he inflicted upon himself as severe a penance as if the fault had been his own. After several useless remonstrances he caused him to be arrested; but scarcely had he been eight days in prison, when, regarding him with the eye of charity, which suffers more in punishing than he does who receives the punishment, he released him, and summoning him into his oratory, said to him, "Come here, my friend. Many a time have I entreated you to renounce your bad habits; tell me what are the ties which bind you so obstinately to sin. Open your heart to me, I conjure you in the name of God. Imagine that you are not before your archbishop, but that you are speaking to your dearest friend, for in truth I assure you, that after God, there is nobody in the world who loves you better, or who

more ardently desires the salvation of your soul, than myself." The poor priest, touched by these expressions of burning love and charity, humbly confessed his crime, the time of committing it, and the cause which kept him engaged in it, which was poverty. At the word poverty the good prelate groaned as if his heart was being torn from his body. "Is it possible," said he, turning to the crucifix, "O King of Glory, that from being poor it can be said that one of my sheep has offended you? It is, then, my fault, not his. For this reason, my Lord and my God, I conjure you, by the blood that you have shed upon the cross for him, that you will show him mercy. Open his eyes, make him see his deplorable state, that he may renounce it and detest it, and that he may return to Thee. As to myself, I will take the punishment which is due for his sins, since it is I who am the cause of them." Then addressing the unhappy man, he said, "Return to your house, receive nothing whatever from the person you know of; I will provide for you. Recite your office devoutly, recommend yourself fervently to our blessed Lord, and return here to-morrow. But as this satisfaction is nothing to the punishment you deserve, take great care that you do not fail in a single point of what I have commanded." S. Thomas passed the night groaning and praying in his oratory for the conversion of this sinner, mingling his tears with the blood that he drew from his body by a very severe discipline. The next day the priest arrived at the appointed hour. Saint

Thomas again took him in private, and discoursed to him with the same fervour and zeal as the preceding day; and although he was the sworn enemy of ostentation, and never spoke willingly of his private exercises and devotions, yet he judged it expedient to do so on this occasion, in order to touch the feelings of this poor man, and make him enter into himself. He discovered to him then a part of his chest and shoulders wounded and bloody. "See, my brother," said he, "see the marks of the penance I have done for your sins. Be assured that if you are so unhappy as to return to them, despising the mercy I have shown you, that God who is just will deprive you of His, and will cut you off as a dry and useless tree to serve as fuel for the eternal fires." These words filled the soul of the guilty man with so much terror and confusion, that, humbled to the dust, he approached to kiss those wounds, promising an amendment of life so solid and so exemplary that he should for the future have only reason to commend. "Ah well," said the Saint, "remain firm in these resolutions, examine your past life, and make a good general confession. As to your future maintenance, give yourself no concern about it, I will allow you three crowns a month, and what is necessary for your daily support. See if it is enough." For several years this alms was continued to the poor ecclesiastic, until, finding himself able to live respectably according to his state of life, he declined receiving it any longer, feeling it was doing an injury to the poor, as it was depriving them of what was their property.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CARE WHICH HE TOOK OF THE HONOUR OF HIS CLERGY, AND OF HIS CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.

As it is the property of true charity to distinguish between sin and the sinner, in such a manner as to hate the one and love the other, so also superiors who possess that divine virtue are accustomed to correct those under their control in such a way, as while punishing their faults to preserve their honour and reputation.

This doctrine was common and familiar to our Saint in the pulpit, as may be seen in his Book of Sermons. But what he so well taught to others he practised still better himself. He endeavoured to hide as much as possible the faults of his clergy, and to prevent any other than himself from discovering them. He kept a book in his cabinet in which he registered the names of his ecclesiastics and the crimes of which they were accused. When informations were brought, he copied them into this book, and then threw the originals into the fire. In drawing up the depositions against them, he never employed any officers but his own visitors, to whom he especially recommended secrecy, so jealous was he of the reputation of the clergy. He gave them in private the correction they deserved, and when he saw the amendment he so much desired, he effaced

what he had written in his book, or tore out the leaf to obliterate all remembrance of it, and to prevent its being handed down to posterity. The extreme care that he took of their good name made him watch their conduct most carefully; though he did not place much reliance on the accounts brought him by laymen, his charity leading him to suppose that some of their complaints might proceed from interest or passion.

On one occasion the parishioners of Liria brought a charge against their curate. He listened to them patiently and heard out the accusation, and did not fail to inform the accused of what was said of him, warning him to take care of his conduct. In speaking of the affair to Dr. de la Porte, he told him he had great difficulty in believing the story, "Although," said he, "these people assure me that the fault of their pastor is notorious, and well known throughout the parish. Go you and visit this place; I will furnish you with authority to draw up the informations; yet recommend the affair to our Lord, and beg of Him light to discover the true state of the case." The visit was made, and it was found that the good prelate was correct in his idea, and that their accusations were false and calumnious, with only a very trifling foundation even in appearance.

At another time he gave a very severe reprimand to one who brought a similar accusation. It was a charge against one of his brethren, made by a man, devout, retired from the world, and of irreproachable life. The Saint at first permitted

him to speak, but the heat of his manner and his indiscreet zeal called for an interruption, "Gently, gently," said he, "dismiss all anger, and look a little into yourself. Remember that he of whom you are speaking is your brother, and as he is in the way of salvation, God can make him a Saint, notwithstanding his present weaknesses. You may fall into the same fault, or you may perhaps fall into a worse one. But supposing that you remain upright, tell me to whom are you indebted for it, if not to the pure mercy of God? Was it necessary for you to come here to discharge your spleen at the expense of your neighbour? Ought you not rather, according to the precept of the gospel, to have warned him of his defects in private, before making them known?" After this charitable advice, with which he dismissed the accuser, he sent for the accused and talked to him in such a way, that of these two ecclesiastics whom he found faulty, each in a different manner, he made the one more holy, and the other more wise and cautious.

When he wanted to send for any one to give him advice or correction, he ordered the messenger to walk two or three hundred steps before or behind the party summoned, for fear that suspicions to his prejudice might be excited if he were seen going to the archbishop so attended.

So great was his compassion towards those whom he was compelled to place under restraint, that no sooner were they in prison, than it was the first desire of his heart to release them. All that he required was, that some one should peti-

tion for them, and that there should be some slight sign of amendment.

Having once confined one of his clergy whom he had often reprimanded without effect, he was much grieved to find that after some time had passed no one appeared to speak in his favour. His charity induced him to seek for intercessors to plead in his behalf. "It seems," said he to to Dr. de la Porte, "that this poor priest has no other friend than myself. Find some one I entreat you to speak to me in his favour. Perhaps he will correct himself after my remonstrances and all that he has suffered." It was done as he requested. The priest was brought into his presence, and his pardon begged of the archbishop, who granted it after a little delay, upon the promise that he made of amendment of life for the future.

This was his ordinary practice on such occasions, and where necessity required it he often added his liberality to their deliverance. He was once so touched with compassion at the sight of one who was miserably clothed, that he sent him a cassock and cloak by a secret messenger. He took especial care that his prisoners, whether clerks or laics, should be liberally supplied with whatever was necessary for their support. And as his object was to gain their souls, not their money, he would never hear, under any pretext, however specious, of a pecuniary composition for their deliverance. In one single instance he changed the punishment of imprisonment for that of a fine of ten crowns, to be paid

to the great hospital, in the case of a priest who was very rich and avaricious, because he knew it would be touching him in the tenderest point and the most likely to teach him wisdom. But this example was the only one of its kind. To the remonstrances of those who urged that this commutation of one punishment for another was very usual in other dioceses, he answered, "I know it well, nor do I wish to condemn the usage; but we judges and ecclesiastical superiors ought to make our inferiors understand and feel that their salvation is the object of our desire, not their purses."

The gaoler once complained to him, that instead of gaining any thing in his service, he incurred some expense in the exercise of his duty, from the number and poverty of his prisoners. Upon his simple word the good prelate paid him whatever he said he had expended from his own resources, and promised that henceforward he would always do the same. The compassion he felt for these unhappy men, induced him often to bestow very large sums on the officers of justice over and above their wages, as well to make them kind and gentle towards the criminals, as to prevent them exacting any money from them. His domestics were treated in the same liberal way. He regularly gave them each ten crowns at Easter as a gift, in acknowledgement of their services, besides what he always paid them for extraordinary journeys. If they fell into misfortune or disgrace, he endeavoured to extricate them from their difficul-

ties, and provided them with whatever help they required.

A man named James Civra, whom he had sent to Enguera, having fallen ill, he charged the physicians and surgeons to attend him assiduously, and at the same time sent him ten crowns by his almoner, and three days afterwards nine more, with all the nourishment that both he and his family could want, and in the course of a few days visited him himself to console him and to bestow additional relief, telling him to be quite easy, for he should be supported until his perfect recovery. Don Francis of Navarre, his immediate successor in the archbishopric of Valentia, said, when he considered his charity and his other heroic virtues, "Where is the man who can attain to the height of this giant!"

CHAPTER X.

THE VIGILANCE AND PRUDENCE OF THIS HOLY PASTOR IN THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS FLOCK.

Of the various qualities springing from the love which the good pastor feels for his flock, there are two, highly useful and necessary to prelates, and indeed to all superiors who desire to acquit themselves worthily of their duties. The first is vigilance, which demands their utmost care and labour to be used for the spiritual good of those they govern, and an incessant unwearied

watching for their salvation, with a willingness to sacrifice even health and life if necessary to obtain this object. The second is prudence and Christian discretion in selecting the most proper opportunities and convenient seasons for setting about any work with a good hope of success.

St. Thomas of Villanova, whom the providence of God had raised to the episcopate to enlighten the Church, and to be an example to the prelates of his own time, as well as of all future ages, possessed these two virtues in a pre-eminent degree. The greatness of his obligations dwelt perpetually on his mind, and the thought of his responsibility kept him constantly in exercise and actively engaged in doing good, knowing on one hand the power and stratagems of that roaring lion who seeks to make his prey of the wandering sheep, and on the other how weak and helpless the sheep are to resist so powerful an enemy, unless protected and defended by the shepherd of the flock. For this reason he neglected no means for keeping those entrusted to his care in safety; he endeavoured to know the defects of all, and each in particular, that he might be the better able to assist them and ward off the assaults of the enemy. It has been already related that he kept an account of all his clergy; in the same way he had a book for lay persons, in which he wrote with his own hand the names of the debauchees, concubines, gamesters, married men who lived separated from their wives, and in short of all those generally who were leading publicly scandalous lives, that he

might reprove them privately and exhort them to return to their duty, as his prudence and charity dictated. Sometimes he sent for one sometimes for another, but always separately, and addressed all according to the mind and condition of each. His first remonstrances were always those of the father and true pastor, and if they made no impression he used his authority as judge, which Spain at that time (and even now in certain cases) gave her prelates to punish the obstinately guilty.

Instead of excommunication and the censures of the church, which he never employed but with extreme pain, he either imprisoned the offender, or punished him by some pecuniary fine, which he always applied to the relief of the poor, though, as already mentioned, he was a great enemy to this latter mode of punishment. If in spite of all his endeavours he met with any one over whom neither gentleness, threats, nor even imprisonment had any influence, as a final remedy he had recourse to the power of the viceroy, who punished his hardness of heart by exile, hunting him out of the kingdom. The good prelate hoped that the fear and shame attending such a chastisement might perhaps lead to amendment; and where it failed to produce the desired effect, he consoled himself by the thought, that being cut off from his flock, the contagion of his bad example would no longer infect the rest of the sheep.

One great cause of regret with S. Thomas was the utter impossibility of his becoming acquainted with all those who lived under his jurisdiction;

his diocese being unusually large and extensive. It was on this account that he endeavoured to obtain the division of the archbishopric, and of the one diocese to make two. He wrote to the emperor, representing to him that the state of Valentia was quite sufficient for the archbishopric, and the mountainous country with that of Xativa would very reasonably constitute a bishopric. That for his part he was ready to renounce his rights and his revenues in proportion as his charge should be lessened, and that if it pleased his imperial Majesty he would himself write to the pope explaining his views, that the more bishops there were and the fewer souls they have to govern, the more easily will they know them, and as our Lord says, "call them by their name," that they may serve, assist, and watch over them.

He was much interested in persuading married persons to live together in peace and concord. If he heard of an instance where this harmony did not exist, he spoke to the husband and wife separately, exhorting them to unity of heart, and afterwards did the same in presence of them both. And from knowing their reciprocal complaints and griefs, he contrived so well and spoke so judiciously, that he often renewed their affection, and left them with the resolution of performing their duties to each other. In cases where the rich were concerned, he added to remonstrances warnings of the indignation of God and of the ruin of their family. If they were poor and sinned through ignorance, he charitably

instructed them in their duty, and if he perceived that poverty was the cause of their estrangement from each other, he easily applied a remedy by his charity.

The burning desire he felt for the conversion of the Moors in the kingdom of Valentia, continually occupied his mind, and left him no repose. Not being able to achieve this great work, he had several times endeavoured to be relieved from his responsibility as archbishop; and when he found that the powers on whom he depended would not consent to it, he wrote to the emperor, begging that he would be pleased to assign a certain sum sufficient to maintain some pious and learned curates, who might also be full of zeal to labour in this ungrateful soil. From the motions of this same charity, he founded a college for newly converted children, with ten thousand crowns of rent, which with the permission of the pope and emperor he alienated from the revenues of the archbishopric; beseeching them at the same time to see fit to increase this foundation from the same source, according as in the course of time their numbers increased.

Before Lent he was accustomed to assemble all his preachers, and exhort them to labour diligently during that holy season, explaining to them what kind of sins were the most common and the most requiring attack. He entreated them ever to recollect, that their object in ascending the pulpit should not be to preach up themselves; nor their design to gain reputation by the exhibition of their knowledge or eloquence;

but the grand desire of their hearts should be to attack and destroy vice, and to found and establish in its place the empire of Jesus Christ.

Those who were confessors, he also prepared for this season of penitence, and the harvest of souls, by prescribing certain rules in the form of familiar instructions. Such as, that they should feel no astonishment or surprise when they found grievous sinners at their feet, still less should they repulse them by indiscreet zeal; but on the contrary, they should receive them warmly, and listen to them charitably. At the same time he gave them this caution, that if any one appeared so hard and indifferent as almost to freeze them with his coldness, he must not be absolved, but some honest and legitimate excuse for dismissing him sought for, with the advice to retire for some days from the world, and petition for the grace of God to discover the heinousness of sin, and to feel the necessary sorrow and compunction for having committed it. "And," he would say, "with regard to yourselves, be sure always to implore the mercy of our Lord in their behalf, in your prayers and sacrifices, and you will see that His Divine Goodness will by this means bless your undertakings. This is what I assure you I practise myself, and I find the benefit of so doing;" a striking testimony of the value which the Saint set upon the soul and its salvation, and an illustrious proof of his prudence and charity in conducting and assisting them in the ways of God.

There were certain maxims and principles of

prudence from which he never departed, some of which I will mention. That it was requisite to teach and explain to all whatever was necessary to be followed or avoided; carefully to seek the most suitable means for arriving at the end proposed; to make use of the laws, and to apply universal rules to particular cases, conformably to the times and the necessities of each person. These, and such as these, were his favourite maxims.

He was never deterred from any undertaking by rumours or reports. He listened patiently to tedious narrations, that he might be enabled to form a more mature and weighty judgment. He never engaged in a certain evil under the appearance of good. By a wise and holy condescension he accommodated himself to the young, the ignorant, and the weak; and, like another Elijah, he used every means for the good of his fellow men. However inconsiderable the affair might be, he never resolved upon anything suddenly, but took time to consider, saying usually, "We shall say mass to-morrow, and we will pray God to inspire us with what He will have us to do." It was very difficult to make him believe the failings of any one, unless he heard it from persons of authority and gravity. He suspended his judgment until he was certain of the thing from the mouth of the accused himself, or by the depositions of several who were ocular witnesses of the fact. He generally attributed to passion or surprise what he heard of others, unless he had the clearest proof to the contrary. To yield his

rights, when by doing so he could avoid contention and deprive the world of a subject of animadversion, was never a difficulty with him. For the sake of peace he often dissembled his feelings, and appeared not to notice things which other persons beneath him in station would have laid hold of in order to resent. He made as few new ordinances as possible, saying, that to publish orders, to multiply commands, and to add to censures, except from absolute necessity, was nothing short of exciting opposition, and giving occasion for men to offend God more grievously, since he who fears not to commit a mortal sin, will scarcely care for censures.

Having found on his arrival in Valentia that a great number of the inhabitants kept mistresses, he severely rebuked them in his sermons, and endeavoured by every means in his power to reform them; but not seeing the amendment he wished, he threatened them from the pulpit, and told them publicly, that if they once by their incorrigibility obliged him to have recourse to censures and excommunication, he would act against all and each in particular with the utmost rigour and severity. Some time after this he caused his mandate to be posted up, and the nature of the punishments he was ready to denounce against the guilty. This mandate caused much dismay and excitement throughout the city, and induced several of the principal inhabitants to go to the archbishop beseeching him not to proceed to extremities; endeavouring to persuade

him that though his intention was praiseworthy in itself, yet these were not times to exercise his authority without doing much evil and very little good. He replied, that since neither his entreaties nor threats would lead them to amendment, he was resolved to employ this last remedy; adding, that with regard to the evil they foresaw would happen to several, it would be their own fault, not his; that in this affair he acted from a sense of duty, his object being to produce a reformation in any way that he could. He wished also to show to all the world that he was not one to flatter men in their vices through servile fear, since he was determined to do whatever lay in his power to punish them and oppose himself to their scandalous conduct. In this resolution he showed so much firmness that the offenders were terrified, and the greater part, though probably against their will, returned to their duty and gave up those sinful connexions.

This procedure, which only deserved applause from its great success, failed not to meet with a censor to whom it gave offence. This was a certain Doctor, who had wished that immediately after the noise of the thunder, the Saint had hurled the thunder-bolt upon the criminals, and could not refrain from openly blaming his wisdom; saying, that the archbishop and all his ministers had sinned mortally by their too great indulgence. The good prelate replied to him who brought an account of this, "Without doubt this theologian is a good man, but of the number of those fervent ones mentioned by St.

Paul as possessing zeal without knowledge." He then ordered the canon, Non potest, quæst. 4, caus. 23, which is taken from the third chapter of the second book of St. Augustine, to be brought and read to him, where this holy Doctor expressly instructs prelates and all ecclesiastical superiors, that when they find that a vice is very deeply rooted it is better to have recourse to our Lord by prayers and tears, reproving the sinner in the spirit of love and charity, than to take the sword in hand and excite the passions of men by excommunications and censures. "Is that good man who does not entertain these sentiments aware," said he, "of the care and pains I have taken to correct those against whom his anger is directed? Have I not reproved and exhorted them several times, both in public and private, and mentioned them as incorrigible to the viceroy and governor of Valentia? Let him in short inquire whether St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, those two great lights of the church, used anathemas and excommunication, to arrest the progress of drunkenness and swearing, which were so common amongst the people under their care? No: for they were too wise and too prudent. They did not think it right to exchange a little good for a great evil, nor inconsiderately to use their authority, and thus excite the aversion of those whose friendship they wished to obtain in order to influence them for their good."

The prudence of the Saint shone conspicuously in the invention of certain means, equally ingenious and innocent, that he sometimes used to draw

persons of distinction from the habits of sin, when neither his sermons nor private admonitions had been able to arouse them to a sense of their duty.

For a long time he had with the utmost solicitude endeavoured to procure an amendment of life in one of his canons, without making the least impression on his mind. He resolved to gain his friendship, whatever it might cost him; for which purpose he dismissed the subject of his past life, and for two years continued to show him every imaginable kindness and favour, until he thought he had not a greater friend in the world. Seeing he had gained his affection, he chose his time and said to him one day, "I am convinced of your good will towards me, and that you would feel gratified in doing me a service; is it not so?" The canon assured him of his friendship, and protested that there was nothing, however difficult it might be, that he would not undertake with the object of pleasing him, if he would do him the honour to confide in him. "I believe you," replied the Saint. "I have an affair at Rome which requires an intelligent man like yourself to manage it, to obtain a happy result. Will you take charge of it, and make this journey for me? For I know not any one into whose hands I can entrust my interests more securely than in yours." The truth was, he was in want of some one near the pope to solicit a brief, without which he was unable to surmount some great difficulties that were raised to prevent the reformation of certain religious, whom he wished to reduce to inclosure. At first the canon was very much surprised and

astonished, yet not being able to find any plausible excuse, he made, as is said, a virtue of necessity, and replied, that he was ready to execute what he should be pleased to command. "Now then," said the prelate, "return to your residence, take leave of your friends, and settle your affairs as if you were never to return from this journey, because in reality it is long and dangerous." After finding these orders had been obeyed, he said, "Come this evening to my house, and we will sup together. You shall sleep there also, and to-morrow morning early I will set you on your way. You need not bring any servant; I will give you one of mine, who shall accompany you, and who will serve you better than any of your own." But the good prelate, who was more anxious for the eternal interests of the canon than for his affair at Rome, having taken leave of him in his chamber, instead of retiring to his own, went into his oratory, where he passed the night praying and weeping at the foot of a crucifix. A little before day he returned to his guest's room, saying, "My friend, you have omitted to do something of consequence. You have settled your house and affairs, you have even assured me that you have made your will as if on the point of death; but as far as I can judge the principal thing yet remains to be done, which is, to set your conscience in order, imploring assistance from on high by a good confession and communion, for the happy termination of so long and perilous a journey. On this account, as my business at Rome is not urgent, your departure can

be delayed a month. I have thought of a project which may not perhaps be disagreeable to you, which is, that since you cannot return to your own house, nor make your appearance in the city, without creating inquiry, you should remain quietly here. Nobody but myself and the single servant who will attend upon you in your chamber will know anything of it. Every one will think you are set out on your journey. You can employ yourself in making an examination of your conscience, that you may afterwards confess to whomsoever you shall select. We will send for the priest you shall choose, to receive your confession without letting him know who you are; after which I will communicate you in the chapel, and you shall then depart with the blessing of our Lord, which it ought to be our object to obtain upon every undertaking."

The canon listened to the archbishop as if God Himself had spoken to him, and acquiesced in all that he proposed. At the end of a month his confessor persuaded him to ask for a further delay, telling him it would be much to his spiritual advantage, to remain in seclusion for another month, perfectly to accomplish that work which our Lord had begun in his soul. He willingly complied with his advice, his heart being already so touched that he was quite another man. The Saint granted his request with joy, well knowing how useful and indeed necessary it was for his establishment in good. Two months having thus passed away, the journey was still delayed, the expected letters from Rome, with-

out which he could not proceed, not having yet arrived. As it was God Himself who by a special providence conducted the affair for the good of the soul of this devout recluse, He inspired him with a willingness to remain in retirement, as the good prelate wished, till the letters arrived from Rome, which he really believed could not be much longer delayed. He continued six months occupied in the holy and salutary exercises of penitence without feeling the least weariness, so delightful had solitude become to him. At length, at the end of that period, the brief arrived. The good prelate showing it to his devout penitent, said, "See, the brief itself is come instead of the letters I expected, so that it will not be necessary for you to undertake the fatigue of this journey. Nevertheless, I feel as much indebted to you as if you had actually performed it, and will endeavour to recompense you on every occasion I may meet with, of testifying my friendship for you. This evening the news of your arrival will be spread abroad, and tomorrow morning you can return to your house." His conversion was complete, and the change in his life and manners astonished all those of Valentia who had known him before, seeing the grace of God superabound where sin had before abounded. This was a singular proof of the Saint's care and love for the souls under his charge, and of the admirable prudence with which he treated them in order to obtain their salvation.

By this same spirit of prudence he knew how to accommodate himself to simple and sincere

persons, charitably bearing with their ignorance when it proceeded from zeal and piety, however great and extraordinary their mistakes might be. On one occasion several villagers of Mislara, in the diocese of Valentia, seeing the air thickened and covered with clouds, which threatened a sudden and horrible tempest, the thunder beginning to roll on all sides, whilst the continual lightning made the heavens appear to be on fire, ran into the church to entreat the curate to present himself at the door of the church with the Cross or the Blessed Sacrament, in order that it might please God to avert the threatened danger. Not finding the priest there, a good old man amongst them clothed himself in a cassock, and with a napkin proceeded to take the ciborium where was the Blessed Sacrament, and to carry it to the lower end of the church, followed by other peasants, with a wax candle in his hand, to implore the Divine mercy with much faith and devotion. This action was in itself rash, and deserved to be punished in the person of the old man, who made the sign of the cross and gave the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which he held in his hands. Nevertheless our Lord, by the virtue of His Divine presence, granted to the faith and piety of these poor people an answer to their petition, visibly dispersing the storm which they dreaded, without its touching their territory. This fact being related to the archbishop, he sent for the good old man who had taken the prominent part in the affair. He praised his faith and zeal, but reproved him for his too little reverence

for the Blessed Sacrament, and made him fully understand his fault; and to expiate it, knowing he had some little property, he ordered him for a year to carry two white wax candles to the church, and to cause them to be lighted before the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday and festival during mass, until the post-communion.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE WONDERFUL CHARITY OF S. THOMAS TOWARDS THE POOR.

Those who know what S. Thomas thought concerning the obligation of all bishops and ecclesiastical superiors to liberality in alms-giving, and who have heard the reason why he was called the father and great almoner of the poor, will have no difficulty in believing what is recorded of his extreme munificence towards them. He loved them so tenderly, and was always so much disposed to do them good, that not content with giving them what he could spare, he often deprived himself of the common necessaries of life to assist them in their distresses. On his arrival in Valentia, he obtained information through Dr. Misleguer, who came to welcome him, of the amount of the archiepiscopal revenues, and expressed dissatisfaction at finding that it was not more than eighteen thousand ducats. "I have been deceived," said he, "I was told it was worth more. But do not imagine that I complain on my

own account, or that it is my own interests which I am considering when I speak in this manner, since a thousand ducats are more than sufficient to support me and my family. But I am sorry because of the number of poor, which is so great in this country; and from what you say I shall not have enough to maintain them." After the general synod was concluded, which he had assembled for the spiritual good of his diocesans, he directed all his care and thoughts to the management and distribution of his temporalities, to be enabled to support the poor.

Of his eighteen thousand ducats he gave to them twelve thousand, including the thousand spent in the foundation of some chaplains in the cathedral, to increase the number of those who assisted at the night office, and the two thousand that went to the college and rectories he had likewise founded for the new converts. With the remaining six thousand he paid a pension of two thousand to Don George of Austria, his predecessor; and the other four were employed in his household expenses, and paying the officers of justice, as procurors, advocates, and others.

Every day there was cooked in his house a large caldron of meat or fish, according to the season, which was given to poor travellers who were in want. Moreover, to others who generally came about noon, there was a regular distribution of soup, bread, and a cup of wine, with the addition of money to those that were maimed or sick. The poor who came there daily were from four to five hundred, and sometimes more, so that

although the court was large and spacious, they were sometimes obliged, as one may say, to make a second table. The charity of those who received them did not deprive of their portions those who did not come in proper time; they were welcome at all hours, because the Saint had expressly commanded that no one should go from his house unrelieved; but at the same time he directed they should be warned that henceforth they should be more punctual to the hours assigned. He never relaxed his liberality, though he was constantly told that a number of these poor people were idle vagabonds, who abused his goodness, and who laughed at his servants after having deceived them by obtaining two alms instead of one. "If," said the Saint, "there are here vagabonds and idle people, it is for the governor and the judge of police to look to them; that is their duty; mine is no other than to assist and relieve those who come to my door. God in His mercy preserve us from ever refusing an alms to the poor! What matters it if they do deceive us and laugh at us, provided that we relieve them in sincerity of heart, and in the name of Him who to enrich us was willing to live and die poor?" As he one day looked from his hall into the court, where alms where then being distributed, he perceived a poor man, after having received his portion, pass over to the side where those were standing who had not yet been served. Nevertheless, he did not perform this feat so skilfully but that one of the servants detected him, and loaded him with reproaches. The man

maintained that he had received nothing, and proceeded to utter complaints and invectives. The good archbishop, who knew the truth, sent to tell the servant to be silent, and to satisfy the poor man, and also desired to know the reason of the uproar. "My lord," said the servant, "it is because I know well that this man has already been relieved, and I assure you they endeavour to impose on us as much as they can." "What," said the Saint, "do you call it imposing on you to receive two alms? I see well that you do not know what it is to be poor; henceforth dispute no more with them; suffer them to impose on you; may it not be that you are yourself imposed on, and that this poor man, whom you call a deceiver, may be an angel that God sends you, to try your charity and patience?"

Amongst those poor whom shame prevented from discovering their distress, he caused two hundred ducats to be distributed by his almoners every three months, according to the necessities of each, besides what he gave with his own hands by the help of the list which he had, of all the necessitous persons of every parish. He so arranged it that those of one parish came to him one week, and those of another, another; so that he was able to see them all himself, and give them relief every three months; no day in the week passing in which he did not in this manner see and relieve more than fifteen or twenty persons. He also assisted poor gentlemen who were in difficulties, as well as ladies, young and old, and persons who had formerly lived in prosperity;

giving them such liberal assistance as to enable them to live comfortably; assigning to this duty the first day of every month. Sometimes they came to him, as persons unknown, in his chapel, and secretly received his help.

With regard to certain persons whose quality would not allow them to come to his house, he employed priests or religious, in whom he knew he could confide, to discharge so delicate an office. By these means, and others like them, which his charity invented, he supported a number of noblemen and widows of rank with so much prudence and compassion, that they lived on his charity without injuring their reputation or that of their families. And if they had daughters to marry, he increased his liberality in proportion, in order that by increasing their dowry they might make suitable matches. But what was particularly to be admired, was the way in which he contrived to help those, ladies especially, who endured great misery without having the courage to disclose it, nor to ask or receive alms. He endeavoured to learn who were their confessors, then sent for them, and promising secrecy, exacted the same from them, and then learning exactly what were the distresses of their penitents, he remitted to them a sum of money, strictly forbidding the priest to mention the name of their benefactor, and only to say that it was from one who owed them a certain sum, but who not having the means to pay it all at once, would do so from time to time, if he might be allowed thus to discharge his debt. The Saint

spoke truly, since according to his own doctrine, bishops make no alms to the poor, properly speaking, as they are obliged to give them what is justly their due.

Ingenuity in devising means of doing good is the property of true charity when arrived at perfection. No one, therefore, will feel surprise that our Saint, who possessed this virtue in so eminent a degree, should employ so many pious devices, and use them so skilfully, in his endeavours to benefit the whole world. The employment of his own possessions for the good of the poor did not content him, but as if his whole heart and thoughts were fixed on this one object, he wished that others also should do the same; and when any visited him, he endeavoured to lead them to the like feelings of compassion and interest. A citizen of Valentia, named Louis Camarene, a charitable and devout man, never came to see him without his inquiring after the poor of his parish, and all his discourse with him tended to recommend them to his care, and to induce him to do all in his power to increase the alms that had been left by the faithful for their subsistence. On one occasion he gave him advice worthy of his prudence and charity. "I assure you," said he, "that I feel much friendship for you, because I see you have so much compassion for the poor. For this reason, believe me, I counsel you as your friend, to dispose of all your property in favour of the poor; and to do for them in your lifetime all that you had intended to do after your death; because God, who can touch the hearts of the

rich at all times and in all places, to supply the wants of the poor, will not demand from you an account of those who are to come, but you will be responsible for those you see now before you in distress, and neglect to relieve them when you have the power of doing so."

With the same zeal and charity he provided for the sick, poor girls, and little children. When it was known that he took charge of foundlings, nursing them, and bringing them up at his own expense, there were often three or four of them laid at his door during the night. So that sometimes he had as many as sixty, seventy, or eighty under his care. He was neither displeased nor astonished at this, nor did he consider it any liberty that they should thus bring them to their archbishop. On the contrary, considering the innocence of these little creatures, and not the guilt of their parents, he received them with joy and delight, following the example of our Lord.

Two of his servants once detected a man in the act of leaving his child at the archbishop's garden gate. After some contention they allowed him to depart, and taking the child they brought it to the holy prelate who was then at supper. He received it into his arms with a cheerful and satisfied countenance, inquired if it had been baptised, and gave it his blessing when he found it had received holy baptism. Then the servants informed him that they had seized the father before taking charge of the child, and that they might have brought him there if they had wished. "You did wrong," said he, "to attack

the father. What did you suppose I should do to him, if you had conducted him into my presence? Are not these poor people miserable enough in their indigence, without afflicting them by unnecessary disgrace? Never let it occur again." Then giving the child to bishop Cevrian, who was at table with him, he begged him to find a nurse for it as soon as possible. "We have," said he, "forty-eight children to provide for, and now we shall have forty-nine; but if we have found means to feed and clothe forty-eight, we can surely do the same for forty-nine, and more still if it please God to send them to us. For I hold it as indubitable, that nothing will ever be wanting to us for the support of the poor." With the same goodness he made a point of seeing these children from time to time, and ordered their nurses to bring them to his house every first day of the month. And when they were arranged in the hall through which he passed to go to say mass, he stopped and looked at all the children one after another, making inquiries of their nurses as to their state of health, and what care they took of them. He reproved the negligent, and gave money above their wages to those whose children were cleaner and in better condition than the others, to induce them all, by the hope of reward, faithfully to perform their duties.

In the same manner he took charge of poor orphans, who by the death of their parents were left without money or protection; and for this purpose he engaged a prudent and aged matron

to bring them up with every possible care. A poor shoemaker and his wife having by their death left three little children entirely destitute, the Saint sent for them, and placed them with this good woman, recommending them especially to her tender solicitude. The love and affection he showed for these little innocents, so won upon their hearts, that as soon as they saw him they ran to him as they would have done to their own father, which child-like confidence continued till they arrived at a proper age, when he placed each of them with masters to learn some trade suitable to their birth. He also educated a great number of others, and his love for them all extended even beyond the grave; having said himself a short time before his death, that he had paid for the nurses and the other expenses of the children for three years after his death.

His almoner was strictly charged to provide the sick with whatever their several disorders required; to give them the best meat for soups, preserves, and in short whatever was ordered by the physician, whom he kept together with a surgeon and apothecary for the benefit of the poor. He always wished that something in particular should be added for those who were afflicted with incurable diseases, in order to console them and soften the bitterness of their sufferings.

The interest he took in young girls who were poor made him extraordinarily liberal towards them, assisting them with the utmost judgment and charity. So much so, that it is said there was not a single marriage amongst the poor in

Valentia while he was archbishop, to which he did not give his contribution according as he judged necessary. He had no fixed time or day to exercise this kind of charity. At whatever time they applied to him his alms was always ready. One condition was, that they should be always accompanied by their mothers, that he might make himself acquainted with their circumstances; and he never dismissed them without giving them some pious instruction upon the duties of their state. He then assigned some future day for their return, making use of the interim to inform himself, by means of his almoner or other discreet persons, of the truth of what had been told him. If the account proved to be true, he gave them sufficient to enable them to marry, and if not, they received only his ordinary alms, as he made it a rule that no necessitous person should ever leave his presence empty-handed. The money employed in this kind of charity amounted to a very considerable sum, there being no poor girls who had gained something in service to whose dowry he did not add twenty crowns; and as for those who had nothing, their parents having been obliged from some good reason to keep them at home, he gave them forty or fifty crowns, sometimes even seventy or eighty, according to their rank in life. There were generally five-and-twenty or thirty every year that he thus provided for. Those young girls who were commonly thought to be well off, but who in reality were not so, received more ample donations. To one he gave a hundred ducats, to

others two or three, or even more, according to their state in life, interest never being requisite to obtain his help, still less that they should exaggerate their wants; for his hand was always open, and he was never better pleased than when he could anticipate their wants by his liberality. A young man upon the point of marrying, begged him to bestow twenty crowns upon him, to enable him to purchase some few articles of furniture; saying also, that the girl he was about to marry was as poor as himself. His request was immediately granted, and the Saint hearing he was by trade a carpenter, commanded his treasurer instead of twenty crowns to count out fifty, to give him the means of buying wood for his work. The young man, surprised at the excess of his goodness, threw himself at his feet to return his humble thanks; but the Saint raising him up said, "My son, return thanks to God for this assistance; for what I have given you is from His property, not mine," and then dismissed him with his blessing. He exercised the same charity towards a poor girl without solicitation; adding thirty crowns to what he had before appointed for her, to enable her husband to buy materials to carry on his trade at the commencement of their housekeeping. The same often occurred in his liberalities to persons of quality, repeatedly adding a hundred crowns, as though he thought he had given too little; his unlimited charity always prompting him to do more and more.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUATION OF THE ACCOUNT OF HIS CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.

This good prelate's compassion for the poor was so great, that not content with assisting them by his immense charities, he never felt greater joy than when an occasion offered of doing them good, nor did he ever feel wearied or importuned by the number or frequency of their requests. In the church of our Lady of Succours, there came one day a man, who throwing himself upon his knees before the tomb of S. Thomas shortly after his death began to sigh and shed tears abundantly. The sacristan having noticed his deep feeling, asked him after the conclusion of his prayer what was the cause of his grief. "Father," said the man, "do not be surprised at what you have seen. Two things have passed between this blessed one and myself, which I can never call to mind without feeling the same sorrow that I did on the day my good father died. The one of them was this. I owed a sum of money to a priest. For some time he had patience with me, and upon my promising soon to discharge the debt, he refrained from arresting me. But at length, wearied with my frequent delays, he put an execution in my house, so that I was upon the point of losing all my furniture.

"Touched with compassion, one of my neigh-

bours advised me to go and complain to the archbishop, assuring me that he was too good and merciful not to order the priest to give me a further respite. I thought I ought not to do this, having so long abused his patience; and it seemed to me to be quite just he should act as he had done, as I was in the wrong for having so often failed to keep my word.

"Nevertheless, my affairs were so urgent and my friends so pressing, one of them even offering to accompany me, that I consented to go. The good archhishop received us very affably, and inquired at once how he could serve us. I told him the state of my affairs, and that I owed the priest seven crowns. 'Seven crowns,' said he, 'it is a considerable sum for this priest to lose; no doubt he stands as much in need of it as you do.' Then calling his steward, he ordered him to give me seven crowns to pay my debt, saying to me, 'Go quickly and satisfy your creditor, for from his acting in this manner, I judge that he suffers no less than yourself.' This was not all. After having received this gift from his hands, I fell into another difficulty, which obliged me again to have recourse to his charity, without which I should never have recovered. I was oppressed with debts on every side, and destitute of means to discharge them unless I sold the house which I held of the archbishop. I was solicited by my creditors themselves, to demand of the archbishop some diminution of his right to the fine of alienation; but I had not the boldness to present myself

before him, feeling it would be a kind of temerity to do so. However, my notary, who knew the Saint better than myself, managed so well that he took me there himself. He recognized me immediately, and spoke with so much familiarity and kindness that I opened my whole heart to him, explaining all my necessities and miseries, and asked pardon if I was so importunate as to beg him after the favour he had shown me, to release me from a part of the fine of alienation that I owed him for my house; the extremity to which I was reduced constraining me to act in this manner. The word 'importunate' displeased him. 'My child,' said he, 'do not speak thus. I look upon no one as importunate, whoever he may be, who comes to me in his hour of need. Do you not know that I am in this place for the very purpose of hearing your distresses, and of relieving them to the utmost of my power?' He then inquired what the fine of alienation was, and having learned, that if he withdrew his claims in my favour, the money would not fall into my hands, seeing it was a part of the price of my house, he refused my request and granted it in another manner. He caused what was due to him to be taken from his own funds and laid on the table, and then turning to the notary, asked him if this money did not belong to him, and if he could not dispose of it as he pleased. He was answered that he certainly could do so. 'Take it then,' said he to me; 'I give it to you. And you, notary, I declare in your presence that I give it to him,

so that I intend he should not be deprived of it under any claim of debt whatever; for in that case I should only do the same again. Go, then, my child, make use of this little sum, and henceforth do not fear to be importunate, whenever you stand in need of my assistance.'" He did a charitable act of the same nature to a poor artisan, whom his creditors obliged to sell his house. To prevent them reaping the benefit of his alms, he himself brought what was due to him in right of the fine of alienation, and freely giving it to him said, 'Take this, my friend, it is not mine, it belongs to the poor.'"

The sacristan of our Lady of Succours, Father John Rezier, one day found a certain woman praying before the tomb of the Saint, and seeing her weep so bitterly, asked her the reason of her tears and grief. "Father," said she, "it is not easy for those who knew the charity of this blessed archbishop, and who like myself have felt the effects of it, to behold his tomb with a dry eye. I will relate to you what some years before his death, a lady of rank in this city told me regarding him. She had disposed of all the best of her property in order to support herself, and in the last necessity to which she was reduced, without daring to discover it, she begged me, knowing I had the entry of the archbishop's house, to represent to him her extreme distress, and to beg him to have pity on her, without, however, mentioning in what way she wished to be assisted. I went to seek him, and mentioned to him the poverty of this poor lady. Imme-

diately, without questioning me as to where and how I became acquainted with her, or who she was, he gave me a very considerable sum for her use. 'Carry that to her now,' said he, 'and return to me whenever she wants the like assistance, without any fear of being troublesome to me. Tell her to love solitude, and to take great care to serve God, and as to myself, I promise you, I will not fail to help her according to the power that God gives me.' "

Time would fail me to relate innumerable other instances of the charity of this holy archbishop, who, besides his ordinary alms, was accustomed, like the patriarch Abraham, to stand at the entrance of his house, to invite passengers to enter that he might exercise the virtue of hospitality. In going to and returning from mass it was his practice to remain for some time in his hall to see and listen to the poor; the mercy he showed them at those hours making a part of his preparation and thanksgivings before and after the holy sacrifice.

This great servant of God and true father of the poor often said that alms consisted less in giving, than in relieving those who were suffering; adding that the Christian who has the power of delivering his neighbour from unhappiness or misery of any kind, and forbears to do it, is unworthy of the name of almoner. It was this principle which made him so often do more than he was asked, always presuming that he had not done enough.

Having heard that the widow of a poor artisan,

who had several little children, had much difficulty in bringing them up, and endured many hardships, he allowed her a sum of money every month. But finding in spite of this help that she often experienced scarcity, he asked her if she was able to do anything to assist herself, and by that means support herself and her children more comfortably. She answered that she knew how to prepare peeled barley; upon which he ordered them to provide her with grain and whatever else was necessary for the employment, so that by means of her labour, and his continued assistance, she by degrees recovered from the pitiable state to which she had been reduced. Poor artisans were often indebted to him for buying them the tools and instruments necessary to carry on their trade; and sometimes he would add a sum of money to encourage them to proceed cheerfully in their labours.

A gentleman of Valentia, to whom the Saint allowed fifteen crowns a month for the support of his family, finding himself at one time sadly pressed by some affair which had happened most inopportunely, thought of having recourse to his kind benefactor. But being in the constant receipt of his bounty, he felt afraid and ashamed to go to him, but went in the night to one of his almoners, begging him to represent his distress to the good archbishop. He did so, and the Saint far from being displeased at his request was touched with compassion. "See," said he, "to what a pitch of distress this poor gen-

tleman must have arrived, since in addition to the fifteen crowns he regularly receives, he comes at this time of the night to beg for more. Let him instantly have twenty crowns." Then a moment after calling to his almoner, he said, "Count me out forty, for my heart tells me that it would not be for a trifling distress he would come here at such an hour. Endeavour to comfort him, and tell him from me to trust in God." It was not only this or that person who excited his pity and compassion, but as our heavenly Father makes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, so did he in like manner bestow his alms upon people who deserved it for their virtues, and others also, who by their bad conduct were unworthy of it. He relieved these last from the fear that by withholding his benefits they might become hardened in wickedness and rush forward to their eternal ruin.

One day he was informed that another gentleman to whom he gave fifteen crowns a month (which was his usual alms for nobles), made a bad use of it, and that instead of employing it in maintaining his household, he sometimes spent it in gaming. The archbishop was urged to withhold, or at least retrench that liberality which was so much abused, to teach him wisdom for the future. "No, please God," replied the good prelate; "for if he does one wrong thing with the money I give him, he might perhaps do two if I took it away from him." However, though he defended the accused in his absence, he reproved

him severely in private, threatening him to give him nothing more if he did not change his life; and corrected him so judiciously that henceforth no one complained of his conduct.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEQUEL OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

I DOUBT not that what has been said above of the charities and bounties of S. Thomas of Villanova will astonish those who regard them only with the eyes of the flesh, seeing that they greatly exceeded his revenues. Human prudence is not able to conceive how he who has but twenty thousand crowns can give away fifty and sixty thousand. But those who know the virtue of almsgiving, and how commonly our Blessed Lord multiplies alms in the hands of His almoners, enabling them with five loaves to feed thousands of persons, and who also know what the industry of a good father of a family can accomplish who does all he can to increase his store by good management, taking care that there are no superfluous expenses in his house, will not be astonished at those prodigies of charity which this blessed prelate performed by means of his holy and praiseworthy economy. Divine Providence, who had created him for the poor, multiplied alms in his hands almost with a glance of his eye, whilst on his part he spared no trouble to make much of little, in order to assist them as much as

possible. Meeting one day with his caterer, who had just bought him a lamprey, he stopped him and inquired what it had cost. "Forty pence," was the reply. "Forty pence!" exclaimed the Saint, "God would not be pleased at my eating what cost so much. What! a fish of forty pence to dine a religious! go, go, take it back immediately. The purveyor of some person of quality will be glad to have it at the price you have given for it." The man replied that he was the archbishop and not a religious, and that this fish was but a trifle for the dinner of an archbishop. "My friend," replied he, "it is true that I am the archbishop, but it does not please me to hear you say I am not a religious. Besides, how often have I told you and all those of my household, that we bishops are no less obliged to consider the interests of the poor in all we do, than are fathers of families obliged to consider those of their children."

At another time wishing to have an old habit repaired, he sent for a tailor and asked him what would be the expense, as he wished to make an agreement with him before his undertaking it. The tailor said he could make no charge for the work, as well from respect for the archbishop, as because of its trifling nature, but would leave it for the archbishop to give him what he thought proper. Upon being pressed to name a sum, he said, "My lord, you will then give me, if you please, so much." But the Saint thinking he asked too much, made him agree to receive less, telling him he would pay what was reasonable,

but no more. The tailor reluctantly acquiesced, and went away murmuring and scandalized, attributing the archbishop's carefulness to meanness and avarice. The good prelate clearly perceived his dissatisfaction, but took no notice of it, not being troubled at his rash judgment, his desire of sparing for the poor making him despise what any one could either say or think, provided there was no fault on his part, and that God might not be displeased with him. He always trusted that our Lord, who knew the purity of his intentions, which aimed only at His glory and the good of his neighbour, would know how to defend his cause in proper time, and place against the censures of men, as he did truly in the case of this man. This tailor was a poor man who had three daughters, all marriageable, but who remained at home because he had not the means of giving them a marriage portion. The parish priest of S. Catherine, who knew their circumstances, advised him to go to the archbishop, and though he could not at first resolve to do so, looking upon him as an avaricious person, yet the priest at last persuaded him to go, and he ingenuously discovered to the kind prelate the miserable conjuncture in which he found his affairs. The Saint knew him at once, listened to him benignly, asked him his name and that of his daughters, and then took leave of him, charging him to return the next day, and to bring his confessor with him. "Go," said he, "and recommend yourself and your daughters to the protection of God, and beg of Him to be favour-

able to you." Having afterwards learned the truth from the confessor, whom he summoned immediately, to inquire about these poor girls, and the advantageous occasion which offered of settling them, "What dowry do you think they will require?" asked he. The priest having replied that he thought thirty crowns apiece would be quite sufficient, he willingly gave it them, and the tailor was to receive it the next day, and to return thanks for his bounty. When he arrived, the Saint accosted him thus: "I promised your confessor yesterday, to give each of your daughters thirty crowns, but as I have since thought it was too little, I will give them fifty, that they may have wherewith to buy furniture, and anything else they may want to begin housekeeping." The poor man was quite overcome by such great goodness and mercy, and threw himself upon his knees to kiss his benefactor's feet, weeping with mingled joy and confusion. But the servant of God raised him up, "Are you not," said he, "the tailor who mended my habit a short time since? yes, without doubt you are the man. I remember you were offended, and thought I dealt hardly with you; you ought not to have been displeased, because I did you no injury, and wished to pay the just value of your work, and if I was not disposed to pay you more, it was not covetousness which influenced me, since the only use I can make of money is to assist the poor, as you now experience in your own case." This charitable action the Saint desired to keep secret, but the gratitude of the poor tailor com-

pelled him to publish it wherever he went, and to eulogise his great bounty and munificence.

I will relate another incident no less striking. A certain artisan with whom the archbishop was not agreed about the payment of some money, left his house very dissatisfied, and likewise suspected him of avarice. However, necessity obliged him shortly afterwards to have recourse to the good prelate, to obtain something for his daughter's marriage. The Saint granted him sixty crowns immediately; and when his steward, who was present and who knew what had formerly passed between them, said to him, "My Lord, some time ago, you treated this man very differently to what you do now," he said, "The expense I then incurred was for myself, and this is a matter of charity. Then it was my own property, or at least that which I am allowed for my own use, this is the money of the poor. As I ask for nothing but what is absolutely necessary for my support, you will not be surprised if I am so careful in what regards myself, and if my expenses go beyond what is simply necessary, that I am so distressed. But in what regards the poor, why should I grudge what is given to them? since it is their own that they receive, and I am obliged to assist them to the utmost of my power."

Some friends once persuaded him to make a lofty hall in his palace, telling him it would be a very great convenience and would cost little. He consented; but finding it a work of time, and that the expense far exceeded what he had been

given to understand, he grieved so much as to be almost inconsolable. One of his canons, named Ribeglies, wishing to speak to him on business, found him walking alone in the hall with the rosary in his hand and his face bathed in tears; and imagining that some misfortune had befallen him, begged to know what was the matter. "Have I not reason, Sir, to weep and mourn," replied he, "at having deprived the poor of so much money by this expense I have entered into? What can I say to my God when He calls me to an account for this?" This wonderful care of the poor was the cause of his wearing his clothes in so shabby a state, having them so often repieced, and frequently even repiecing them with his own hands. One of his vicars, named James Cevrian, having once found him in his chamber mending his stockings, was so surprised that he exclaimed, "My Lord, for eight or ten pence you might get this work done without giving yourself so much trouble." "My child, you know not what you say," replied he, "for I find the greatest consolation and joy in this occupation, considering that these eight or ten pence which I save by this trifling work will be very useful to some poor man." Another time, as all the doors of his house were open during the day, there entered a poor man with the design of begging something to help him to marry his daughter, but having watched him from afar mending his clothes, he conceived a contempt for him; and thinking he was mistaken in his intention of applying to him for relief, he was about to return without a word,

when the Saint, who had noticed him, called to him to inquire the object of his coming there, and why he was going away without speaking to any one. "Do not be afraid," said he, "to tell me boldly what it is which has discouraged you here." "My Lord," replied the man, "I have a daughter to marry, and I have nothing to give her, if your lordship does not take pity on her and me." "Then," replied the Saint, "you saw me mending my clothes, and you were going away without making your wishes known to me. This was not well. You must know that the very reason for my thus working with my own hands, is that I may save all that I can to give you, and all those who come to me in their sorrows as to their Father." After having, according to his usual custom, informed himself of the character and circumstances of this poor man, he assisted him and his as he had requested.

But to understand the pain and anxiety of mind he suffered when he had been induced to spend money upon any other object than the poor in his diocese, it will suffice to relate the motives which led him to found a college for a certain number of poor scholars in the university of Valentia. The affection he bore to the university of Alcala, joined to the desire he had of doing something for the good of the religious of his order, induced him to begin building a college, of which he gave them the administration. This was in itself a pious and praiseworthy action, which could not be anything but laudable in the sight of God and man; it being a thing so just

and natural in a religious raised to the prelacy, to remember his order and his brethren when he could do so. Nevertheless he so much regretted the expense of this edifice, because it was beyond his jurisdiction, that thinking he had done a wrong to the poor of his diocese, he resolved to repair it in some fashion by building them another college at Valentia, where he placed some priests, and gave it the name of our Lady of the Temple, in honour and consideration of the favour God had done him in calling him to religion on the day that the Blessed Virgin was presented in the Temple, and to show all religious, and especially those whom Divine Providence had raised to ecclesiastical dignities, how they should esteem their first vocation.

It is proper here to mention the inscription the good prelate had placed on the front of this college, at the time he dedicated it to our Lady. "To the honour and glory of the Blessed Virgin, and for the good and profit of all souls, but particularly those of this diocese; I, brother Thomas of Villanova, by the grace of God and the holy see, archbishop of Valentia, have built and founded in this city of Valentia, a college for poor scholars, under the title of the most Blessed Virgin Mary of the Temple, inasmuch as on the same day that she was presented in the Temple, I was presented to receive the habit of our glorious Father S. Augustine, in the convent of Salamanca. And in memory of this signal benefit which I received from the liberal hand of our Lord, through the interces-

sion of His Holy Mother, I have dedicated this temple to the most sacred Virgin, and I wish that every year the day of her presentation may be solemnly celebrated as a festival in the chapel of this college."

The same feeling which led him to form this college under the name of the Blessed Virgin, induced him also to ornament and embellish his church with very rich and exquisite hangings of tapestry which he presented to the Cathedral, whereon the joyful mysteries of this Queen of Angels are admirably represented in silk; the beauty of the material being surpassed by the skill employed in the workmanship, so as almost to exceed nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY OUR LORD IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS BY S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

The Holy Spirit speaking of a rich man who has no attachment to riches, who values them as they deserve, and who while possessing them uses them as not his own, designates him as one who works miracles. "Blessed is he who is rich, and can preserve the innocence of his heart in the possession of riches. But who is he, and where is he to be found? Wherever he is, he deserves to be praised and to be canonised as one who does what is beyond the power and strength of nature." It is Christians to whom

God has entrusted temporal goods, that the Holy Spirit speaks of thus. They who by the rays of faith with which they are enlightened, use their wealth only as a means of acquiring virtue; not in fomenting vice, and encouraging themselves in every degrading crime. To raise the dead, to give sight to the blind, and to cast out devils, are supernatural works, and pure and simple effects of the goodness of God; yet without doubt our Lord sometimes employs the wicked and impious in performing these miracles. But to live poor, and like a poor man in the midst of the greatest abundance; to possess riches of gold and silver, and yet to regard only those of eternity; this is what can never be done, and is never seen without especial assistance from heaven, and a more particular grace from the Divine Goodness; so that it is a more solid and certain pledge of a man's holiness than if he could resuscitate the dead and work other miracles.

After what has been said of the wonderful detachment of our saintly prelate from earthly riches, and of the use he made of them, which the Holy Spirit calls so great a miracle, it would seem scarcely necessary, in order to make his sanctity acknowledged by all, to mention those more striking and obvious miracles which our Lord enabled him to work. The multiplication of his revenue, which never amounted to a third part of what he annually distributed to the poor, was a continual miracle, and would seem sufficient to be mentioned; yet there are so many

individual cases well known and well attested, that to pass them by unnoticed would be injurious to this history, and deprive the reader of knowledge which he will not find useless. For these reasons, then, I will relate some of the most remarkable instances on record.

The holy archbishop, whose principal concern was always the care of the poor, foreseeing one year shortly after harvest that there would be much suffering amongst them, on account of the poor crops, provided for it in time, and like a good father, to anticipate the evil, bought up from the farmers all the corn they could spare for a price which paid them so well they found no reason to complain. He ordered all the corn he had bought to be carried to the environs of Valentia, and for the more distant parishes he caused some to be distributed here and there in portions ready for the relief of the poor, of which he knew the number and the necessities. The granaries of his house, and even the hall, of which I have spoken before, were filled with the grain he had bought, and he ordered his steward to deliver a certain quantity every week to all the poor of the town, as also to those other needy persons whom he relieved secretly every month. His charity, which in this public distress had ample scope for exercise, had its eye upon all and provided for all, like another Joseph. Now as it was extremely difficult to conceal charity so general and extensive, several persons who until now had lived without assistance, but whom the times had brought to poverty, came to him like-

wise to implore his mercy. Amongst others there came three poor widows, who for a long time had lived very comfortably, and in the reputation of being rich and at their ease. But at length they were reduced to such distress, that they could no longer subsist without making it known, and threw themselves at the feet of this charitable father, entreating him to have compassion on them and their poor children, and that he would be pleased to give them a small portion of corn, as he did to others. He immediately commanded they should be satisfied, upon which his steward told him they had finished distributing all the corn which was in the house destined for the poor, which was not astonishing, seeing the great number who begged for it at every hour of the day, it being a thing impossible that it should last so long as he thought.

The good prelate was greatly surprised at the answer of his steward. "No," said he, "I cannot think it is as you say; go up and see if there does not remain a little to give these poor women." His servants went merely to satisfy him, and returned assuring him that it was all gone, and that the place even had been swept. "It is not possible," he still said; "I will go myself and see if it is so." He went, followed by his servants and steward. "Open the door," said he, "I have so much confidence in the goodness of God as to believe He will have pity on these poor women." The door was opened, and the granary found to be filled with corn, not

without great astonishment on the part of the steward and the two servants, who were bewildered and almost terrified at the sight of so evident a miracle that God had wrought by the merits and in recompense of the faith of this charitable father. He caused a sack of corn to be given to each of these poor widows, and relieved the one who had nine children of three of her little ones, taking the charge of them himself. He endeavoured to comfort them all, and exhorted them to patience in their labours, and never to distrust Divine Providence. He recommended secrecy to all those who had seen this wonderful miracle; he even forbade them, in the name and on the part of our Lord, to say anything of it to any one. For some time the miracle was kept secret, even in Valentia, but in course of time a confused account of it was spread abroad, and at length it became public and known to every one. Those who were the witnesses of it made juridical depositions, and his confessor, Father James Montiel, attested it; and the author, whose history I follow, preached soon afterwards on the subject, from the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, (it being the fourth Sunday of Lent,) with which the Son of God satisfied thousands of persons, to show how the mercy of God appears in multiplying alms, when it pleases Him, in favour of the poor.

It often happened that the cloth he bought for the poor multiplied in the hands of the persons engaged in making it up, so that in cutting it out more shirts and sheets were found, by a very

considerable number, than the cloth could possibly furnish, humanly speaking. Sometimes the linen was multiplied in the giving, it having often been seen by those who distributed it, that the poor received more than they had intended to give them. This miraculous multiplication was not confined to corn and linen, with which he fed and clothed the poor; his money also increased almost visibly in the distribution of his alms. As he was once journeying in the country, he commanded one of his servants, who was entrusted with a bag of money, to draw from it a certain sum that he wished to distribute among several poor people that he saw before him. "My Lord," said he, "there is not much remaining; it has lasted a long time, considering how largely you give every hour of the day." The servant, going to his mail to take the bag, which he knew had been more than half emptied, found it as full of money as when he received it on leaving Valentia. This prodigy so astonished him that he threw himself at the feet of the Saint, recognising in his person the power of Him who had just wrought this miracle by his merits.

To conclude the account of this kind of miracles I will mention one more which is no less admirable. The good prelate was accustomed to send Bishop Cevrian and Dr. de la Porte, his visitor, to make the visitation of his diocese every year. That their efforts and labours might be more effectual and less interested, he forbade them to take anything whatever from the clergy, not even a repast, amply providing them with

all that was required, that they might not be a charge to any one. Knowing also how much more efficacious spiritual charity is when accompanied by temporal, he caused them to be followed by a quantity of serge, linen, and clothes of all kinds, with a very considerable sum of money, to be distributed amongst the country poor, furnishing them even with crosses, chalices, and ornaments for the churches which had none, and which had not the means of procuring them. Upon their departure he exhorted them to carry their hearts and hands open, to give with joy and alacrity, and especially to new converts, to make them understand it was their souls, not their goods that they sought, and to remember that God is never sparing in His gifts to those who are liberal to Him. Our Lord, willing to show how agreeable such service is to Him, permitted the two visitors after having finished their visit at a place called Xavea, to go on to another. They were no sooner arrived there, than Dr. de la Porte, thinking to take some money from his portmanteau to begin his almsgiving, was wonderfully surprised and distressed at not finding there the bag for the poor. He ransacked and turned over all his goods, but could find only the money for their own expenses, and not that for alms.

He wrote to the curate of Xavea, and dispatched a man in the night, praying him to see the landlord where they had lodged, but this proved to be useless; the man returned in the morning with the answer from the curate that

nothing could be found in the inn. Being in the greatest affliction at the loss, they went to say mass with all the devotion possible, to recommend this affair to our Lord as His own. He heard their prayers. For being returned to the inn, and on the point of using the money allotted for their expenses to relieve the poor who had hastened to see them, resolving to borrow money on the promise of the prelate, with which they were furnished in writing, at the first place they could, what was their surprise and astonishment when they went to take the bag, to find there the one appropriated to the poor. What increased their joy and astonishment was, that they not only recovered all the money they had left, but also what they had taken from it to give away, the bag being so full that it seemed to have been squeezed and pressed to make it hold more. On their return to Valentia they related this incident to the Saint; but he, without showing any surprise, said smiling, that the same thing had often happened to him in almsgiving, our Lord multiplying money in favour of the poor, when after having done all that he could, there still remained many to be relieved. "Have then faith," said he, "enlarge your heart when you give to the poor, without fear of falling into want, because we have in heaven a great Master, and a most liberal Father of the poor, who will never fail to furnish us with something to give them, if we trust in Him, and treat them liberally, after His example."

When he had land that he wished to let out to

farm, though he put it up to a public auction, where every one was at liberty to name any sum he pleased, he was still desirous it should not fetch a price above its value and the strict rule of equity. Hearing one day that two merchants piqued themselves on being the highest bidders for some of his land, and of having raised the price of it to their own disadvantage, he sent to tell them to put a stop to it. When any loss happened to any of his farmers, he never expected them to make it good, but always requited them for it, though in justice he was not called upon to do so. Sometimes, to prevent their deceiving him and abusing his goodness, he ascertained the truth of the facts. It once happened that a certain cavalier of Alzira, who had rented his tithes of the same land of Alzira, not having the means of paying at the time fixed, from some misfortune which had befallen him, permitted himself to be summoned by the archbishop's officers, which also caused some expense, as he did not answer the summons. At length, finding himself pressed on all sides, and not knowing how to hide himself from the threatened storm, he was obliged to have recourse to the compassion of the good prelate, not having the courage to disclose his distress before, for fear of losing the high character he had acquired of being a good paymaster. He then came humbly to represent to him the sad state of his affairs, begging him to order that a stop should be put to his pursuit, promising him that he would acquit himself of the debt if he would be pleased to grant

him a short delay. "Take care," replied the Saint, "that what you say is true, for I shall make inquiries about it." Having ascertained that what this poor cavalier had told him was perfectly true, he sent for him and said, "God forgive you; why did you not have recourse to me when first this debt was demanded of you, and tell me how you were inconvenienced? However, be not troubled. I not only grant you the time you ask, which is little, but I declare that I will not take a single penny from the farm. I release you from payment for the whole year, because I see that you are poor, and in that capacity I have no claim upon you. The money I now give you is not mine, it belongs to the poor."

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE DEATH OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

S. Thomas passed eleven years thus in the exercise of every virtue, with all possible zeal and affection, labouring to procure the glory of God, the reform of His Church, the salvation of souls, and the relief of the poor, until the year 1555, which Divine Providence had fixed upon as that which should end his labours, and recompense his merits, and put him in the possession of a happiness which, as he said, in an apparition which is well authenticated, "the whole world could neither understand nor be able to bestow." The death of a saint and of a great and good

man is generally looked upon by his country as the presage of some approaching calamity; and as a labourer who sees the air become thick and dark hastens to gather in his corn, to shelter it from the threatened tempest, so our Blessed Lord, who watches over His elect, draws them to Himself from among those He is about to chastise for their crimes, that the innocent may not share the punishment of the guilty, calling them by His pure mercy from this mortal and perishable life to that of an ever blessed eternity. It is this which makes wise men, who are aware of what the public lose by the death of a saint, regret and deplore it, as Elisha mourned the carrying up into heaven of the holy prophet Elijah, because of the fatal consequences they foresee will ensue. By his departure they find themselves deprived of the blessing of his presence, which served them as a shield and buckler to defend and protect them against the arrows of Divine vengeance justly excited.

The death of a friend of God is, then, a sign of some great scourge from heaven to punish the sins of men. Such was that of our holy archbishop of the town and kingdom of Valentia, since having died in the end of the year 1555, his diocese was nearly perishing from a famine in 1556, which was the forerunner of a horrible pestilence that caused such ravages the following years of 1557 and 1558, that there scarcely remained any among the living to bury the dead.

On the 29th of August he fell sick of a quinsey, brought on by his continual watchings and study,

accompanied by a pain in the chest, which began to trouble him as soon as he became archbishop, from the little repose he allowed himself. For, to satisfy himself in the discharge of his duty, which occupied him nearly all the day, and to keep up his practice of mental prayer, and his other spiritual exercises, he was constrained to employ the greater part of the night, and to deprive himself of necessary sleep. He had said mass the day before with very great devotion to S. Augustine, whose feast it was, having always borne a singular respect to the name and memory of that illustrious father, it ever being his glory and delight to remember he was one of his children. The weakness which suddenly seized him after saying his office, made him know that the time of his departure was approaching; and he could not refrain from showing the joy this anticipation gave him, as if he had received some special favour from the hand of Almighty God. Then judging by the fever, which increased, that he should not rally, he made a general confession, placing himself in the hands of our Blessed Redeemer, entreating Him, with the most humble and entire resignation, to dispose of his life and death according to His good pleasure.

The Monday following, which was the 2nd of September, he earnestly desired to receive the blessed Sacrament, which was solemnly brought him in procession for the example and edification of the people. The blessed Sacrament was also exposed in all the churches, with the forty hours prayer, in which every one joined for the benefit

of their good bishop, and communicated with a more than common devotion from the hands of bishop Cevrian. The canons, religious, the greater part of his clergy, and as many persons as could enter his chamber, were bathed in tears, fearing they were going to lose their dear father and pastor, whom they so loved, and by whom their affection was so tenderly returned. On the Thursday, three days before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the physicians having pronounced him to be slightly amended, all the city, fluctuating between fear and hope, breathed freely once more at this happy news. However, as the Saint felt himself more oppressed than he had yet done, and as it is also very possible that our Lord then revealed to him the hour of his death, which it is certain He did before it arrived, he caused five thousand ducats which he kept in the sacristy of the Cupola, to be brought to him, and placed them in the hands of bishop Cevrian, of the canon Michael Vigue, of Father Peter of Salamanca, religious of the order of S. Dominic, and of his almoner and treasurer. "You know the affection you ought to have for me," said he, "and I doubt not that you will willingly do me a good service. Here is an occasion which presents itself. Do me the favour to go over all the parishes of the city on every side, and distribute all this money to the poor, each one according to his wants. Have care also for the persons of quality who are in distress. But I entreat you in the name of God, do not bring a single penny back into my

house, for that would grieve me. If you cannot dispose of all to-day, finish to-morrow." They employed the whole of the next two days in seeing and visiting all the poor families they could find, giving large alms to those who were in debt, or to those who had daughters, to some a hundred ducats, to others fifty or sixty, and to none less than four ducats.

These two days were not sufficient to empty their purse. The Saint inquired on their return if all had been disposed of; and on their answering that they had still twelve hundred ducats, though they had relieved all the poor in Valentia that they could discover, he exclaimed with great feeling, "O, miserable sinner that I am, must this money remain this night in my house! go seek some other poor though it is late, and if you cannot succeed, carry it to the hospital. Do me this favour I beseech you." They told him that what remained would be very serviceable in paying the nurses, and for the support of the poor orphans who would be in danger of suffering much, in case it should please God to call him to Himself. "I have provided for them for three years," replied he, "so pray, gentlemen, give me this consolation, and go immediately and distribute the money amongst the poor." Returning to see him the next morning, which was the Vigil of the Nativity of our Lady, they told him they had given all. "My friends," said he, "I pray God with all my heart, to bless and comfort you, for having thus comforted me by what you tell

me." Then turning his eyes towards his crucifix, which he had used in the conversion of so many sinners, they saw him weep for joy, thanking our Lord for granting him the favour to die poor as he had desired. His peace of mind was a little disturbed shortly after by his treasurer, who came to tell him that he had that day received some money, and to mention that his furniture was still in the house. But the Saint would not lose the merit of the poverty he loved so much, but commanded the money to be divided amongst his servants, and as to his furniture, he caused it all to be taken to the college of poor students to whom he had left it by will, excepting the bed on which he lay, which he gave to the keeper of the prisons, begging him to lend it him, for the short remainder of his life, that he might be able to die absolutely despoiled of every thing.

The pain which he felt was violent, yet he suffered without complaint; his countenance was always calm, and he preserved his judgment to the last, perfect and entire. Notwithstanding all his pain and weakness, he received those who came to visit him with the same gentleness and affability which he displayed when in full health, and permitted none to leave his presence without exciting them to the love and fear of God and care for their salvation by some passage from Scripture, judiciously selected according to the disposition and state of each of their souls. Several of them returned as much touched with what they had seen and heard, as if an angel

had spoken to them rather than a man. The canons who had learnt from the physcians, that according to the natural course of the malady, he could not last long, went to beg him to allow them the honour of giving him a place of sepulture in their church; he received their offer thankfully, and testified all the gratitude possible, but said to Don Jerome Cartos, who was on his knees before him delivering their message, that he felt extremely obliged to their body, for the favour done him on this occasion, but humbly begged them to consider that he was a religious, and as such he had thought it best to choose his burial place among his brethren of our Lady of Succours, and called upon them, in the name of God, not after his death to prevent his last wish from being attended to. Upon this, not to distress him, they dropped the subject, intending to resume it on a more fitting opportunity.

On Saturday evening, the Vigil of our Lady, after having entertained himself some time alone with his God, he caused Extreme Unction to be administered to him, and received this Sacrament with sentiments of devotion which excited the admiration of those who assisted, making the responses himself with the other ecclesiastics, and reciting the verses and the prayers which the Church is accustomed to use in this holy ministry. That being concluded, the canons, not repulsed by his refusal, threw themselves a second time on their knees, renewing their request touching his sepulture. But he returned the same answer; that he was a religious, and that he did

not desire to be separated from his brethren, either in life or death; adding, that if our Lord in His goodness, and without regarding his offences, deigned to show him mercy, he would endeavour to prove his gratitude for this last mark of their affection, by interceding for them in His presence.

The next morning (the Nativity of our Lady) he prayed his suffragan to dress quickly an altar in his chamber, and to prepare himself to say mass there. "For," said he, "as there remain for me only a few moments of existence, I wish not to leave this world without once more seeing my Saviour in this holy sacrifice. When the priest came to the Sanctus, they raised his head a little, and at the consecration he adored the blessed Sacrament with so much tenderness, and so many tears flowed from his eyes that no one who was present could prevent doing the same. Immediately after the elevation he began the Psalm, "In te Domine speravi," which he continued with tears until the verse, "In manus tuas," and when the priest finished his communion, he at the same instant finished the course of his holy life, and gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator. All the assistants remarked in his last moments, that the nearer his end approached, the more beautiful, serene, and shining his countenance became.

His death, which was known immediately in the city, caused so much grief and dismay, that from the cries and lamentations which were heard on every side, it would have been supposed

that each one had lost his own father. Every church in Valentia was hung with black. Every one appeared in an extreme affliction and depression of spirit for the loss they had sustained, whilst the holy body was being prepared for the funeral ceremonies. He was clothed in his black habit instead of the white which he had worn during his illness. They then put on his pontificals, the cross, the mitre, and the pallium, and everything appertaining to an archbishop. The moment after his death, the palace had been so besieged by people wishing to enter, that to prevent confusion it had been found necessary to close the doors until bishop Cevrian and the heads of the chapter had dressed him themselves, and carried and laid him in the great hall where he was accustomed to give alms and comfort the poor, watering his hands and his face with their tears which they could not restrain. But no sooner was there a free entry than every one crowded in, each thinking himself happy if he could see him and kiss his hands, but especially the poor, who, according to bishop Panfile's account, amounted to eight thousand. The Divine goodness permitted it should be thus for the honour of the Saint, whom they regretted as their father and chief consolation.

The chapter, magistrates, nobility, the parishes, and all the orders of the city followed the body from the archiepiscopal palace to the cathedral, and from the cathedral to the monastery of our Lady of Succours, where he was to be interred. But of all the means taken to show him honour

in his funeral obsequies, there was nothing which proved so clearly the veneration in which he was held, as the deep feeling of sorrow testified by all present. In place of chanting and reciting the prayers ordered by the Church in such cases, nothing was heard but weeping and groaning. The priests, religious, and all the people, having their hearts so oppressed with grief that they could utter no other sounds but those of mourning and lamentation; whilst the poor on their parts filled the air with their cries and groans. "What shall we do, what will become of us," said they, "without our good father!" Thus this sad and mournful procession went on till it arrived at our Lady of Succours, where his sacred body was solemnly interred in the most honourable place in the church, notwithstanding the Saint had expressed a wish to be buried in all respects like his brethren.

As he had left nothing to defray the expense of any monument to his memory, having disposed of everything in favour of the poor, without caring to leave his name written on earth, our Lord who had written it in heaven, to honour it also on earth, inspired one of his canons, Francis Bocca, who during his life had always considered him as a Saint and a great servant of God, after his death to erect a rich tomb of marble with his figure in pontificals in relief. As also to engrave this epitaph, to descend to posterity as a memorial of his extreme charity towards the poor:

"Conditur hoc tumulo D. Frater Thomas de Villanova Archiepiscopus Valentinus, Divini verbi Prædicator eximus: Qui Christi pauperes, benigna quidem manu, non solum vivens fovit; sed ad extremum usque spiritum amplissimis Eleemosinis est prosequutus. Obiet autem die Nativitatis sanctissima Virginis Mariæ, anno M. D. LV."

In like manner he inspired the bishop of Segovia, formerly disciple and religious of St. Thomas, to put his writings in order, especially his Sermons and Commentaries upon the Canticles, and to have them printed under the name of the author, who in the schools of Spain is always designated the Seraphic Doctor, to distinguish him from St. Thomas Aquino the Angelic Doctor. One of his admirers has given us reason to hope that the first leisure time he can obtain shall be employed in revising his works, to correct them of the numerous errors which have crept into the German edition, and in a new dress to render them more common in France.

It is of faith to believe that the charity of the saints and servants of God towards their friends is nothing lessened by their death. And as St. Peter promised the faithful in his second epistle to remember them before God after his decease, that by his care and prayers the doctrine which he had taught them should not be effaced from their memory, so they lose not the affection for those with whom they have contracted a friendship upon earth, but it is rather increased in heaven, where they pray for them and procure

them every possible favour with so much the more zeal and affection, as in a state of glory their charity is more pure and perfect.

S. Thomas of Villanova, who wished to end his life as he had so long occupied it, in assisting all men, promised some of his friends in particular to remember them after his death. That they might be confirmed in their opinion of his holiness and merits, our Lord permitted him to appear to them after his death, radiant with light and glory. I will relate some amongst many of these remarkable appearances.

The respect and devotion which the chapter bore to his memory, induced the canons, who by his death became possessed of the power to alter many things in the government of their church, to content themselves with simply electing a grand vicar, till the see was filled. Through respect and love for their venerated prelate, they permitted the order he had appointed, and all his officers, to remain as he had established them, and bishop Cevrian and Dr. de la Porte only left the palace when they heard that Don Francis of Navarre was named archbishop. They then took for their residence the great house of the archdeacon, near the cathedral. On the evening they arrived, all their discourse after supper turned upon the virtues and conduct of their charitable pastor, of the loss sustained by the city and kingdom of Valentia, and especially by the poor, who seemed in him to have lost a good and merciful father.

They then retired to their chambers, their

tears flowing plentifully at the remembrance of all his goodness. Dr. de la Porte, who, filled with grief and sadness, had continued watching till two hours after midnight, perceived at that time, in the midst of a beautiful and resplendent light, the blessed S. Thomas approach the bed with a countenance full of majesty and reverence, and dressed in his Augustinian habit as he usually wore it during his life. "Why do you weep for me?" said he; "weep for me no longer if you love me, since I enjoy a repose and happiness that the whole united world has not the power to bestow." Having said this he vanished from his eyes with the light which surrounded him, leaving his devotee with mingled feelings of holy joy and admiration, scarcely knowing whether he ought to consider this as a true appearance of the Saint, or an illusion of the enemy. Yet he was wonderfully consoled in his inmost heart, and as soon as it was day repaired to the chamber of the bishop, who seeing the joy and astonishment depicted in his countenance suspected what had happened to him. "What is the news?" said the good prelate to him, "is it possible that you have seen our good father?" "How, my lord," replied he, "have you also seen him yourself? I have indeed seen him, and I came here with the intention of telling you all that passed. In the name of God tell me what happened to you." Upon comparing, they found that the Saint had appeared to them both the same hour, in the same habit, with the same splendour, and that he had rejoiced and comforted their hearts with the

same words. Having well examined and considered the subject together, there remained not the least doubt upon their minds that it was a real and true apparition with which the Saint had deigned to honour them.

Another apparition, which will be the last I shall relate, that I may enter at once upon his miracles, will be an illustrious example of his charity and love for the poor; since in the midst of his enjoyment in glory he remembered them, and continued his care over them in their sufferings. The Saint finding himself on the bed of death in his last illness, and desiring to dispose of whatever remained in his possession in favour of the poor, had summoned his tenants to know to what amount each was indebted to him, and to draw from them a promise to pay it at a certain time, that the whole might be distributed to the poor according to his last will and the apostolic brief which he had obtained to be used for that purpose. Then addressing himself to a certain citizen whom he had always thought his friend, and a man of perfect probity, "You are witness," said he, "to the promises of my tenants, by which the greater number oblige themselves to pay me at Christmas and the rest at Easter. I believe they will do so, but if they fail keep them to their word, I confide these notes to you, and entreat you for the love of God, as soon as you shall have received the money to distribute it amongst the poor, and comfort them in their misery at the

beginning of the year. And may God in return bless you and make you happy."

His friend promised him faithfully all that he asked; but no sooner was the Saint laid in the grave, and the fear of his ever becoming acquainted with his perfidy at an end, than after having received the money which was due with much care and exactness, he distributed only a part of it amongst the poor, and used the rest in furthering his own affairs, though with the intention of restoring it when it should be convenient to him. S. Thomas appeared to him the night of the Epiphany, and with a voice animated with anger and a just resentment, said to him, "How! faithless that you are, is it thus you deceive me? How long have you lost your honour and stifled your conscience? I should never have thought this of you; nor would it ever have entered my mind to believe that you would have been so little conscientious as to prefer your own interest to that of the poor, and to assist yourself by leaving them in distress. What you have done is a fault for which God will not fail to punish you, unless you prevent it by a timely penitence; because the tears which the miserable have shed, are living words which penetrate the heavens, demanding justice of God for your sins." At these words the man was seized with horror, and quite beside himself at such a reprimand. He protested he would fulfil his promise to the letter, and entreated the Saint in the name of God to implore the divine mercy for him.

The next day he returned a part of the money, but still not the whole, being unwilling to inconvenience himself, or disarrange his affairs. The Saint again visited him on the night of the Purification, and with words much more harsh and severe, called him a liar and a man without faith; he threatened him with sudden death, and told him that God would never have mercy on him, since he disdained to show it to the poor who were his members. "You imagine," said he, "that I am dead. No, no, I live a life infinitely better than that which I lived when you pledged your word to me." Then turning towards a boy who followed him with a discipline in his hand, "Strike, strike this man," said he, "that he may remember his duty, and that he may obtain a wholesome spirit of fear." The boy obeyed, and disciplined him till the Saint told him to desist. "Lose not the remembrance of this warning," said he, "profit by this punishment; it is far less than you have deserved."

It was scarcely day, when the man, astonished beyond expression, called for the archbishop's almoner, not being able to rise from the bed himself, on account of his wounds, and relating to him what had passed, placed in his hands all the money he had in the house; and as more was necessary, he borrowed of his friends, that he might not remain indebted to a creditor so exact and punctual as the Saint. He published everywhere the glory enjoyed by the Saint, and the zeal he continued to have for the poor as well in heaven as when on earth; like the holy

patriarch Abraham, who after having passed the best part of his life in works of mercy and hospitality, even after his death lodges the poor Lazarus in his bosom.

May it please God of his infinite goodness so to dispose the hearts and desires of each one of us, that we may profit from the example this holy prelate has left us of his virtues; that following his footsteps, and aspiring to attain his humility, meekness, recollection, charity, and mercy; we may labour for the glory of our heavenly Father and the good of our brethren; that our end may be as happy as his; and that with him we may eternally enjoy the repose and immortal felicity which he now enjoys and will for ever enjoy throughout all ages!

ABRIDGMENT

OF THE

MIRACLES OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA,

RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE,
AND ARCHBISHOP OF VALENTIA.

TAKEN FROM THE PROCESSES OF HIS CANONIZATION.

Though it may seem, after the recital which has been made of the virtues and merits of S. Thomas of Villanova, that here the discourse might end, and that it could not extend farther than his death and burial, without going beyond the bounds of history; nevertheless, as my design in writing his Life was no other than to make known his holiness by the relation of his virtuous actions, and as the miracles performed by God in his favour and by his suffrages are also proofs of his sanctity, though not so convincing as his charity and good works; it is well I should relate some out of that prodigious number of miracles with which our Lord honoured his name and memory, especially a part of those which were verified and approved with all the solemnities required in such cases for proceeding to his canonization; knowing that in the question of miracles it is better rather to regard their nature than their numbers.

After one word, then, on the miraculous incorruption of his body, not to weary the reader, it

will suffice to relate those only which were last exposed at Rome on the day of his canonization, in pictures suspended from the ceiling of S. Peter's, with an inscription at the foot of each.

INCORRUPTION OF THE BODY OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

In the year 1588, twenty-three years after the death of S. Thomas, the devotion of the people at his tomb increased daily, from the continual miracles which God performed for the benefit of those who had recourse to his merits and suffrages.

A canon of the cathedral, Don John Baptist Vivas, who revered him much, resolved to give him fresh proofs of his devotion and remembrance by providing, at his own expense, a silver lamp of great value, and a railing of bronze richly worked to inclose his tomb, which until then had remained open to the church. To lay down this railing it was necessary to raise the tomb and the marble figure upon it, and to dig the earth around it. While this was being done there issued from the tomb an odour so sweet and agreeable, that in the judgment of some perfumers who were present, there was nothing to be compared to it, either amongst the most excellent perfumes, or flowers the most rare and exquisite.

In this exhalation there was a something divine and inexpressible, which elevated the mind and feelings beyond what was natural. All judged unanimously that this odour came from

heaven, since there was nothing to be found like it upon earth, and that God, through His goodness and justice, began to make this holy body enjoy, in some sort, the happiness that the soul which had animated it already possessed.

But when, upon seeing and touching him, it was found that his body was still entire, and almost as fresh as when they laid him there, not even his habit being decayed or corrupted, there was a universal cry of joy and admiration at the wonderful spectacle; and they blessed the infinite power of Him who had done this for the glory of His faithful servant and Saint. Everything was afterwards carefully examined, and upon its being verified that what was seen could not be the effect either of art or nature, but proceeded from the Author of nature Himself, who when He pleases renders Himself admirable in His saints, a deposition was drawn up in due form, which was produced thirty years afterwards, in the year 1618, with several other testimonies to his sanctity, and laid before Pius V., who in the same year declared him blessed, permitting the religious of the order of S. Augustine, of the kingdoms of Castile, Arragon, Valentia, and Catalonia, to revere his memory, and celebrate his feast on the 18th of September.

Soon afterwards Gregory XV., successor of Pius V., desirous that this celestial light should be raised higher to spread its rays far and wide, to the glory of God and the exaltation of the holy Church, granted by a benignant extension of his favours, that the festival should be kept

universally in all the houses of the order, with a double office, which was continued till the pontificate of Alexander VII., whom God had destined to complete the work of his canonization. This pontiff held him up to public veneration by the declaration which he made in the year 1658, accompanied with that splendour which the pious reader, who wishes to satisfy his curiosity, will find described in the account which is printed of the holy and august ceremonies of his canonization.

MIRACLE I.

MULTIPLICATION OF CORN IN FAVOUR OF THE POOR.

The first of these miracles was that which S. Thomas wrought to relieve a poor widow who had several children, whom she was unable to support unless assisted by his charity. She went to pour into his fatherly ear all her cares and distresses, and the state of destitution to which she was reduced, and entreated him to bestow on her a bushel of corn, to save her children from feeling the pangs of hunger. Her request was granted instantly; but to the faith of the Saint was reserved the execution of it. He commanded his servants to provide her with the quantity of corn she desired, but received for answer, that it was all gone, and that the granary had even been swept. He could not credit the account, and insisted on their going to see if there was not a little still left. They went, merely to satisfy

him, and returned assuring him that there was none left. In this there was nothing astonishing, considering the number that were daily and hourly relieved, as the servants were strictly enjoined never to send any one away empty handed. But his charity, which was the cause of his granary being so soon emptied, joined to his faith in the mercy of God, made him go himself, saying, that he could not believe that our Lord would abandon him in this strait, when he was endeavouring to relieve Him in the person of this poor widow. He found his confidence was not misplaced, for on his arrival the granary was found to be full of corn, so that he could say, like the rich man in the Gospel, though in a very different sense, "I must pull down my barns," being scarcely able to open the door, so pressed was it by the quantity of corn within. The poor widow received two sacks, whilst the servants, who a moment before had seen the place empty, were altogether astonished, and scarcely knew what to say or think in so extraordinary a case. This miracle seemed in one respect greater than that which the prophet Elijah performed for another widow, since the prophet only multiplied meal, while our Saint caused corn to exist where there was none before, by the power of his faith and word, as if God had communicated to him his absolute power of creating. The inscription to this miracle, on the picture at S. Peter's at Rome, was as follows:

"Horreum frumento prorsus vacuum Sancti Thomæ nutu plenum repentè invenitur ad pauperes sublevandos."

MIRACLE II.

S. THOMAS WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS CURES A LAME AND PARALYTIC MAN.

ANOTHER miracle which proves, no less than the preceding, the great merits of S. Thomas, and how powerful he was with God, was that of the cure of a poor man who was both lame and paralytic. One day, as the good prelate looked from his chamber into the court where alms were given, he perceived a man who walked with crutches, having lost the use of his limbs, who, after receiving an alms on one side, went over to the other to obtain a second. S. Thomas called him, and asked him if he had not already received an alms. The man acknowledged that he had. "How comes it, then," said the Saint, "that you try to get another?" "It is true, my Lord," replied the poor man, "that what I have received is quite enough for myself, but it is not much when divided into four, for I have a wife and two children, who are not able to come and obtain anything for themselves." "It is not enough, certainly," said the Saint. "Now tell me, which would you prefer—that your health should be restored, or that I should order them to give you four alms every day?" "Please God, my Lord," he replied, "I should prefer recovering my health; for I assure you that if I could work I would rather do so than beg for the support of

my family." "Now then," said the Saint, "have a great faith and confidence in God;" and raising him upright, he gave him his blessing and perfect health at the same time; recommending him to return thanks to Almighty God for what he had just done. The poor man quitted his crutches upon the spot, walked without pain, and as perfectly well as if he had never been afflicted with any disease. This miracle is very similar to that which S. Peter performed on the lame man cured at the gate of the Temple, excepting that the holy apostle excused himself from granting any other aid than that of health, saying that he had neither gold nor silver to bestow, whilst S. Thomas, who had both for the poor, gave some to this poor man, as well as his restoration to health. This happened the year before the death of the holy prelate. The inscription of this miracle was as follows:—

"Claudus itemque paralyticus à Sancto Thoma crucis signo liberatur."

MIRACLE III.

A DEAD CHILD BY THE MERITS OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA RAISED TO LIFE AT HIS TOMB.

One of the children of Augustine Assenti, widow of Gabriel Cardonne, a citizen of Valentia, named Francis Paul, had been afflicted for seven months with a malignant fever, no physician having been able to do him the least good. At

length, after much suffering and being reduced to a state of extreme weakness, he died. The poor mother was quite inconsolable at his loss, and her grief was increased by the regret she felt at not having taken him during his long illness to the tomb of S. Thomas. Yet not losing all hope in his mediation, though they were about to lay her son in the grave, she took him in her arms to our Lady of Succours, and laying him on the tomb of S. Thomas, prayed him with many tears to assist her in this extremity. Scarcely had she prayed for the space of three Paters and three Ave Marias than the child raised his head, and held out his arms to his mother, who embraced him with a joy which could be more easily imagined than expressed in words. She returned her grateful and humble thanks to our Lord and S. Thomas, whom she ever afterwards honoured as her patron and holy benefactor. The child, who had attained the age of seventeen months, recovered from his first death to die again in his fourth year. This miracle had these following words for the inscription:

"Puer, adolescens XVII., mensuun Matre ad sepulchrum Sancti Thomæ precante reviviscit."

MIRACLE IV.

A GIRL SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE ALSO RESUSCITATED AT THE TOMB OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

In the year 1604, a woman of Valentia, named Esperance Crespo, widow of Anthony Fabia, was

in the deepest sorrow at the state of her daughter's health, whose life was despaired of by the physicians, and whose death was only delayed from day to day by the tender and watchful care of her mother. At length she expired, and the poor woman closed her eyes, watering them with the tears which fell from her own. After the body had been kept some time, and they were upon the point of consigning it to the grave, the thought came into the mother's mind, that she would have recourse to the prayers of S. Thomas of Villanova, whom she particularly venerated, and have her carried to his tomb. She followed her poor child's body, and cold as it lay in the arms of death, made with great faith this prayer: "Blessed father, I beseech you to pray to God for me, that it will please Him to grant me the life of my daughter, for I have a great confidence in you, and I firmly believe that you are a Saint in heaven." This short prayer was no sooner made than the girl began to move and to show all the signs of life and perfect health. Every one present was struck with astonishment, whilst the mother, who had obtained what she so ardently desired, praised and thanked the goodness of God, who had favourably heard her prayers through the merits of S. Thomas of Villanova. This was the inscription of the fourth miracle:

"Virgo XVI., annorum, cum propè esset ut conderetur, ad vitam à S. Thoma, flagitante Matre revocatur."

MIRACLE V.

A BLIND GIRL RECEIVED HER SIGHT AT THE TOMB OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

This miracle, so much the more worthy of the Saint's compassion, the subject of it being of so tender an age, was wrought on a little creature named Marcella, daughter of Anthony Mathieu, Doctor of Laws, who from the age of three years had suffered from a disease of the stomach, which caused her to vomit blood from her mouth, and to return whatever nourishment was given her. Three months she continued in this state, nothing that was done for her seeming to give her any relief. The disease increased, so that at times she was almost suffocated, and at length her eyes were affected, and she entirely lost her sight. Some time afterwards, her mother, who was deeply afflicted at her state, going to make her devotions at the tomb of St. Thomas, determined to take her child with her; and laying her little hands upon the tomb whilst she knelt by her side, she humbly invoked the assistance of the Saint for her. Then leaving the church, she gave some money to the sacristan that mass might be said for that intention. It is most remarkable, that at nine o'clock the next morning, the very hour when the holy sacrifice was being offered for her daughter, she recovered her sight, and was cured of her disease and all her infirmities, from which she had suffered so much.

The rest of her life was passed in the enjoyment of perfect health.

"Puella triennis, dum ad aram Sancti Thomæ Sacrum peragitur exitiali morbo eripitur."

MIRACLE VI.

BY TOUCHING THE RELICS OF ST. THOMAS, A GIRL IS MIRACULOUSLY CURED OF A DISEASE PRONOUNCED INCURABLE.

Another girl, of the age of twenty-six years, knew not what remedies to use for an ulcer which was spread over the whole of her face, so disfiguring her that no one could look at her without horror. Seeing this disease increase, and at length attack the vital parts of the body, the physician told her plainly that she had now nothing more to do than prepare for death, which would shortly arrive. A friend, who was very devout to S. Thomas, persuaded her to have recourse to his prayers, and to believe firmly that God would not fail to assist her by the merits of the blessed archbishop. She then caused some of his relics to be brought to her, which she applied herself with much faith and devotion to the parts which were the most painful, and almost instantly the disease disappeared. The flesh and skin which had before been putrified and decayed, quickly recovered their first and natural appearance, as if she had never been afflicted by so dreadful a disease. The inscription to this miracle is in these words:

"Virginem XVI. annorum fœdè ulceratam, et jam jam morituram, S. Thomæ reliquiæ saluti reddunt."

MIRACLE VII.

A CURE VERY SIMILAR TO THE PRECEDING BY THE MERITS OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

A GIRL, whose leg and part of the thigh had been eaten away by an ulcer of long standing, expected death every day, the agonies she suffered rendering her life wearisome and almost insupportable. In this state she addressed herself to S. Thomas, and prayed him with much devotion to intercede for her, that she might obtain, if not the health which she scarcely dared to ask for, at least an alleviation of her pains, and strength to endure them until it should please our Lord in His mercy to deliver her from them in His own good time, by putting an end to her life and suffering together. Her prayer was heard, and even beyond what she had expected. For the Saint not only obtained the alleviation, but also the entire cure of her disease; the leg, which before had been almost deprived of flesh, being now perfectly sound and firm, without any remains of its former condition, except some cicatrices upon the skin, which remained, as it were, to remind her continually of this wonderful miracle. It is described under this title:

"Virgo desperato remedio cruris graviter vulnerati Beati Thomæ ope sanatur."

MIRACLE VIII.

A WOUNDED MAN, AFTER HAVING KEPT HIS BED TWO YEARS, IS MIRACULOUSLY CURED BY THE INTERCESSION OF S. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

One day, when the people of Valentia were diverting themselves in the bull-ring, a shoemaker, named Peter Assentio, had his side pierced by the horns of one of those beasts, which threw him to the ground with so much violence that he lay there dreadfully hurt. He was carried upon a ladder to his house, and every means taken for his recovery, for two years, without effect. For this reason, finding all human remedies useless, and only exhausting his purse without restoring his health, he resolved to have recourse to heavenly remedies by a special vow, which he made to S. Thomas of Villanova. From the first day of the Novena which he made at his tomb, he felt himself considerably better, and before it was finished, was entirely recovered.

"Valentinus Sartor, cui tautro in theatro latus graviter effoderat post biennium à S. Thoma liberatur."

MIRACLE IX.

A MAN COVERED WITH ULCERS, WHICH CONFINED HIM TO HIS BED FOR FOURTEEN YEARS, IS IN AN INSTANT RECOVERED BY THE PRAYERS OF S. THOMAS.

A MASTER mason of Valentia, named James Cervere, who had kept his bed for fourteen years, without hope of ever leaving it, except to be carried to the grave, the ulcers with which he was covered being pronounced incurable, in the month of October, 1605, was reduced by a fever and other complaints to the most extreme misery. Seeing then death before his eyes, he was visited by a person who was very devout to S. Thomas of Villanova, who induced him to invoke his assistance, and to recommend himself to his prayers. The poor man did so, and obliged himself, in case of his restoration to health, to hang a picture over his sepulchre, in which this miracle should be painted. It having pleased our Lord to listen to his prayer, three days were not passed before he found himself perfectly recovered, and all his wounds quite closed and healed. He afterwards faithfully performed his vow to the Saint.

"Fabro cœmentario lævum latus continenti vulnere excæsum S. Thomæ presidio restituitur."

MIRACLE X.

A PARALYTIC RECOVERS HIS HEALTH THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF S. THOMAS.

In the year 1608, a man of Valentia, named Ciper, at the age of fifty-six years, had a paralytic seizure, which deprived him of the use of one side. He tried every remedy which was suggested for his recovery, but finding that he only spent his time and money without any effect, he asked his health of God in fervent prayer, through the merits of S. Thomas, who, by touching the affected side with his right hand when he was sleeping, perfectly restored to him the use of it.

"Apopleticus S. Thomæ dextra in somno tactus incolumis evadit."

MIRACLE XI.

A WOMAN IN A DANGEROUS LABOUR IS MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED, AND HER DEAD CHILD BROUGHT TO LIFE THROUGH THE MERITS OF S. THOMAS.

Anne Torres, wife of John Ramos, a citizen of Valentia, suffering for several days every imaginable pain in her confinement, gave birth at last to a dead child. Those who were present vowed her to S. Thomas, to whom she had always been very devout, and included the child also in the vow, which was no sooner made, than she was in

a state to return thanks to God herself. Our Lord not only restored her health, but the life also of the child, through the intercession of S. Thomas, whom she had invoked in her sufferings.

"Infanti mortuo vita simulque matri in extremis laboranti sanitas ope D. Thomæ restituuntur."

MIRACLE XII.

A DEAD MAN RAISED TO LIFE BY S. THOMAS.

The author whom I have followed relates in his history so many miracles performed through the merits of this glorious Saint, from the year of his decease, 1555, to the year 1626, not to mention those which our Lord has continued until the present year, 1659, that there are enough not only to make a third part to this history, but an entire book, which we hope one day to see brought to light. I shall, then, end this account of his miracles with the remark of one who still lives, and who still speaks to preach the merits of this great Saint, to whom he is indebted for the life he now enjoys. This person is an Augustinian religious, named Father Thomas Bosch, between eighteen and nineteen years of age, who maintained a theological thesis in our convent of S. Augustine of Valentia the 28th of May of last year, 1628, which he dedicated to S. Thomas of Villanova, under this glo-

rious title, "In vitæ restitutæ obsequium;" to acknowledge the favour our Lord had shown him in his early years, having miraculously restored him to life by the merits and prayers of S. Thomas, to whom his parents dedicated him. The truth of this fact cannot be reasonably disputed after the testimony of this thesis, which has been seen, examined, and approved by the Spanish Inquisition, according to custom and the right it possesses in such cases. It has been placed in my hands by brother Louis Lubin Diacie, theologian of the community of Bourges, who has lately brought it from Spain, where the devotion to S. Thomas of Villanova, and the desire of obtaining knowledge, have detained him for some years, and who during his residence at Valentia, has seen this Brother Thomas Bosch, whose learning and virtue he holds in high estimation. He remarked among other things, that in conversation the tears always came into his eyes whenever he spoke of S. Thomas of Villanova. "In vitæ restitutæ obsequium."

THE LIFE

OF

SAINT FRANCIS SOLANO,

APOSTLE OF PERU.

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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

While his Holiness, Paul III., exerted his energies in crushing the numerous heresies which during his pontificate disgraced Europe, and the great Charles V. was extending his dominions in the West Indies, S. Francis of Solano was born in the year 1549, in Montillo, situate in Andalusia, the most fertile of the provinces of Spain. His father, Mathew Sanchez Solano, was held in such high repute among his fellow citizens, that he was twice elected provost of the city, and his mother, Anne Ximenes, was descended from a family equally distinguished for virtue and for birth. Spanish historians who have written his panegyric, have, in allusion to his name Solano, *Sol uno*, compared him to the sun, the bright luminary of day. Indeed, it seemed as if heaven had formed him to carry the light of faith and the heat of charity into regions where the sun produces its richest treasures; for he extended the kingdom of Christ

among those nations just then subjected to the Spanish monarch, and in the wilds of America repaired those losses to the holy Catholic Church which she sustained in Europe.

He went through his studies in the Jesuits' college of his native town, and during the period which they occupied, so far from betraying the evil inclinations unhappily so common in youth, he was a model of virtue to all his fellow students. He participated most devoutly in the holy sacraments at suitable times, spent hours in the church on his knees occupied in mental or vocal prayer, and devoted beside all necessary time to his studies. To avoid idleness, he cultivated his father's garden, preferring to humble himself after this manner, rather than to expose himself by idleness to those temptations by which so many souls suffer eternal shipwreck. He was so modest, so prudent, and so well behaved, that it was the common opinion his object was to become a Saint, rather than to be deeply learned; and his companions had, perhaps in consequence, so much respect for him, that they durst not hazard in his presence an improper expression. One day, while playing together on the banks of the river which flows through Montillo, two of them quarrelled, and from words proceeded to strokes; but Francis threw himself between them, and though one of the combatants hit him severely, he desisted not until he had appeased both. Being afterwards asked if he did not feel hurt, he replied very calmly, "O my object was to reconcile them, and having succeeded in it, I have suffered nothing."

Another time he was equally fortunate in a more important matter. Two men went to fight a duel outside the town; by accident Francis perceived them, sword in hand, bent on each other's destruction, and without fearing, as he well might, their dangerous weapons, he cast himself between them, and spoke to them so forcibly and so sweetly, that they let their swords fall, made peace one with another, and returned to the city good friends, though they had left it, as we may believe, mortal enemies.

But these were only little essays, in his secular condition, of that wonderful charity which the Saint was one day to practise towards his neighbour, as we shall see further on.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCIS ENTERS RELIGION, AND AFTER HIS NOVICIATE IS PROMOTED TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

Divine Providence, which from all eternity designed Francis Solano to be one of the principal ornaments of the order of St. Francis, inspired him so with the desire of embracing it, that in 1569 he solicited and obtained the holy habit in the convent of Montillo, one of the most strict in the province, being then in his 20th year. As after a protracted winter, the sun causes the fairest flowers to expand their leaves as it were suddenly, so did grace make the rarest virtue bloom in this servant of God, the moment he left

the bleak region of the world, for the genial climate of holy religion. The noviciate was very rigorous in this convent, and yet the fervour of Francis led him to increase the austerities. The habit not seeming sufficiently coarse, he put on a hair cloth, and continued to wear it through life. He generally slept on a plank of cork, and in Lent and Advent upon a hurdle made expressly of large sticks, having no other pillow than a log of wood. He never used meat, eggs, or fish, save on solemn festivals, and then only by express command, his usual diet being bread and herbs or fruit; on Fridays he ate nothing prepared by fire; and during Lent he fasted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays on bread and water. To these austerities he added disciplines so severe, or rather so cruel, that it was often necessary to wash the place where he had knelt, because of the quantity of blood with which it was stained.

He so strictly observed the silence prescribed by the rule, that he never spoke but when necessary, and always so as to edify his neighbour. Modesty, sweetness, humility, and the other virtues which he had practised in the world, shone more brightly by his religious profession. His spirit of prayer was so eminent, that not satisfied with the time prescribed by the rule for this holy exercise, he devoted to it a considerable part of the night, and often the morning star found him on his knees communing with the Almighty. Some of his fellow novices, who survived him, deposed in presence of the commissaries appointed by the holy see to examine

his virtues and miracles, that even in the novice-ship they considered him to be a Saint, and his Father Master, Peter of Ojeda, declared to them on oath, that he deemed his disciple De Solano the most perfect image he knew on earth of a crucified God.

After his profession, he continued for two years the exercises of the noviciate in the same convent, advancing in virtue as he advanced in age; laying a deeper foundation of humility, living as if he were an angel in mortal flesh, and never reflecting that he was professed, save to remind himself that he was in consequence obliged to be more obedient, humble, mortified, and exact than the novices.

These holy virtues were more remarkable in him when employed in "questing" or begging alms for the convent through the city, as was usual. It pleased God to honour this beginning of his functions by two miracles. While asking an alms, a woman, according to the custom in Spain, begged of him to read a gospel over her child, who was covered with ulcers; and Francis, after getting the child undressed, and recommending it to God, having licked the sores, they were soon after healed, and a perfect cure established, whether in reward of this heroic mortification of his senses, or by the efficacy of his prayers. The cure of a poor person who begged alms at the city gate was also attributed to this holy man; for he had fallen on his knees before this suffering member of Jesus Christ, and kissed his feet, and a few days after the poor man's legs, which

were almost fetid with ulcers, became perfectly sound.

It was now the year of our Lord 1571, two years after he had made his holy profession, when the superiors thought it advisable to remove Francis to the convent of S. Mary, about three leagues from Seville, to study philosophy and theology. The cells were numerous enough in this little sanctuary of peace, but to exercise greater poverty, and live in closer retirement, our Francis chose a little corner under the roof of the church, near the belfry, where he constructed for himself a lodging. His furniture consisted of a wooden seat, and a hurdle for his bed, without mattress or coverlet. In this little cell he esteemed himself more happy than a king on his throne; there he spent whole days in silence, far away from the society of men, but fully compensated by that of God.

It is related of S. Bonaventure, that he derived spiritual profit from all that he learned, and that hence his works are far more moving than those of other theologians. Now it is true, that S. Francis, who was specially devout to this seraphic saint, endeavoured, like him, to derive spiritual food from his studies. His fasts, prayers, and tears, supplied for the dryness and sterility of the sciences; while he was engaged in acquiring them, he strove to humble himself, and so far from contenting himself with fine speculations, he enriched his will with good habits and holy resolutions.

Would to God that all students followed his

example! Many pique themselves on becoming learned, but few try to become holy and virtuous; and yet, learning without piety is often a snare which the devil spreads to inflate the mind and heart, and thus lead to eternal destruction; and after all, what reward can be expected in a future life for being very erudite, if one be not very holy and very perfect? Far better is it for a religious, surely, to surpass in sanctity, than in science and learning.

CHAPTER III.

SAINTLY CONDUCT OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO, AS VICAR OF CHOIR, PREACHER, MASTER OF NOVICES, AND GUARDIAN.

The government of religious houses is, or should be, as conformable as possible to that of the celestial hierarchies, in which God regulates and appoints the various functions according to the several degrees of capacity and merit. Thus it was in the case of S. Francis Solano, for during his studies he was promoted to the various employs of religion. About the year 1573, he received the order of priesthood, and celebrated his first mass on the feast of his glorious patriarch, S. Francis. His father came from Montillo to assist at this first sacrifice, and returned transported with joy at the fervour which he witnessed in his son, and the favourable testimony borne of his sanctity by his religious brethren.

Discovering his capacity for every office, the superior first named Francis Master or Vicar of Choir. There was great reason to be satisfied with the manner in which he discharged this trust; for he had a fine voice, he perfectly understood plain chaunt, was most exact as to the ceremonies, had the office regulated beforehand, and was always first in, and last out of choir.

Francis was next engaged in preaching, and his words drew such efficacy from his works, that his arguments were irresistible, so that the most inveterate sinners became his conquest. Indeed his mortified countenance alone preached penance, his tears inspired it, and his whole manner and deportment enticed his auditors to the practice of Christian perfection. The death of his father caused him to intermit his preaching for a while, his mother's age and loss of sight requiring that he should visit her. It is scarcely necessary to say, that even then he was not idle, but laboured in the vineyard of the Divine Husbandman, by the consolations and spiritual help which he imparted to this only surviving parent.

On returning to S. Mary's convent in 1575, he was appointed Master of Novices in the monastery of Arizafa, near Cordova, which caused him to resume his old but intermitted exercises of the noviceship, persuading himself that he could not better form his young charge to the exercises and to virtue, than by his own example. Some of them, convinced of his great sanctity, not satisfied with observing him during the day, watched him at night, and thereby

discovered that he spent the greater portion of it in prayer; that he was on his knees almost always, whether in his cell or in choir; that he often remained before the holy Sacrament from matins until prime; that he severely disciplined himself; and that profound sighs and broken sentences sometimes escaped him at prayer, which proved him to be deeply penetrated with divine love. These discoveries made a great impression on them, but the following rule of his produced greater. It was, that when they committed a fault deserving correction, he obliged them to come to his cell, and in virtue of holy obedience, commanded them to give him the discipline unsparingly, as attributing to himself their faults, and in the belief that if he were not so great a sinner, they would not be such imperfect novices.

Inquiring of him what was the best penance which a religious could practise; he told them it was to exercise patience in adversities and trials, above all when they were inflicted by parents, friends, or religious persons.

Another time they besought him to tell them how they had best use the discipline, so as to feel more pain; and he said that it was by striking different parts of the body, remembering that at His scourging the Son of God was rent and torn from the crown of His head to the soles of His feet.

The salutary lessons of this pious master could not fail in forming fervent novices. Indeed the superiors were so pleased with his suc-

cess, that in 1577 they sent him to the convent of S. Francis of the Mount, to continue there the same function. This house was the sanctuary, so to speak, of the province of Andalusia, affording wonderful facilities for holy contemplation; for it was situate at the entrance of the frightful precipices which form the Sierra Morena, and was remote from the villages by a league and a half at one side, and by nearly double that distance at the other. Our saint loved this place well, as it may be supposed; there he greatly advanced in the spiritual and interior life; all his pleasure was silence, all his joy recollection, all his sweetness prayer. To these angelic exercises he joined many external mortifications. One day happening to see a quantity of thorns collected in a hollow near the convent, and conceiving the desire of imitating his holy founder, he undressed, threw himself upon them, and rolled himself about on this thorny couch until he was covered with blood. He fancied that this act had none but God for witness, but two religious saw him by chance to their extreme edification.

Besides training the novices, Francis being ordered to catechise and preach in the vicinity of the monastery on Sundays and festivals, went through the villages instructing the children, who flocked to him on all sides. If the passers by stopped, as was sometimes the case, he spoke to them with so much unction and fervour, that several cast themselves on the instant at his feet, truly converted, and made their peace with God.

Nor did this success elate the saint, on the contrary, it rendered him more humble; and what is equally worthy of admiration, after having exhorted and catechised for hours together, he returned fasting to the monastery, refusing the invitations that were made to him on all sides.

Universal joy prevailed when the holy man was appointed guardian of this convent; he himself was the only one to regret it, and that he sincerely did, for he made every exertion consistent with holy obedience to avoid it. To acquit himself well of the office, he was the first at all regular observances. His exactness surpassed that of the novices. He went on quest with the sack like the rest of the community; anticipated the infirmarian, very frequently discharging the lowest offices for the sick; and sometimes entering the refectory, he wept bitterly while the religious were at table, and cast himself on his knees, accusing himself of his faults, and beseeching them to impose a penance upon him. This fervent conduct produced excellent results on the brethren, who were thrown into a holy confusion by this humility of their superior. They confessed that nothing so strongly pressed them on in the path of perfection as his example. The superior ought ever to be a fit model for those he governs; example is so much more influential than precept. When he advances at the head of his community, few, if any, stray from the direct path; whereas, if he is content with fine speeches, if he only *says* and *does* not, individuals act as they please, and follow the blind guides of their own self-love and self-will.

CHAPTER IV.

CONDUCT OF S. FRANCIS OF SOLANO DURING THE PLAGUE AT MONTORO.

Charity is the queen of virtues, as uniting us perfectly to God, and leading us to lend our neighbour all manner of assistance. Hitherto we have been showing that in the former Francis was a proficient, and that his heart was a furnace of divine love; we will now prove that he manifested in the most convincing manner the ardour of his love for his neighbour.

All know and dread plague, as being almost invariably followed by sudden death; and, therefore, no sooner is one stricken by it, than friends and relations fly away and leave him to his fate, unmindful alike of the obligations of nature and of religion. Not so S. Francis of Solano: soon after he had ceased to be guardian, the city of Montoro was afflicted with this dreadful scourge to such an extent, that for the accommodation of the numerous sick it was found necessary to lodge many of them in a hermitage dedicated to S. Sebastian, outside the city, which was soon filled to excess. Not being sufficiently supplied with confessors, our holy servant of God being then more free, the period of his guardianship having expired, besought the new guardian for permission to go and assist the sick, and having obtained it, proceeded with a good religious, named Father Bonaventure, to assist the

sick and dying in the hospital. They were received in Montoro with great respect and joy, and the poor plague-stricken inmates of S. Sebastian's, in which they took up their abode, looked upon them as terrestrial angels deputed to their relief and succour, for in their service they did and suffered many things which appeared to surpass human exertion.

Here they consoled the afflicted, exhorting them most tenderly to commit themselves perfectly to the will of Divine Providence; they administered the Sacraments, they assisted the agonizing, they made the beds of the sick, they prepared their remedies and their food, they buried the dead; and all this with so good a grace, so diligently, and so sweetly, that charity shone in their least as well as in their most signal actions. Indeed, this holy virtue lent them wings, so to speak: days and nights otherwise were too short for their numerous and onerous occupations. As to the fear of death they had none, knowing that should they sink in the glorious cause of charity, it would be followed by a blessed immortality. F. Bonaventure experienced this, it is to be presumed; for he became a victim to the dreadful malady. Our Saint sensibly felt his decease, but the evident marks of predestination which accompanied it greatly consoled him.

Here we should remark in passing, that those who die thus may be considered martyrs of charity, this virtue having its heroes as well as faith. The Roman Martyrology honours with the title of martyr those who in the reign of

the emperor Valerian lost their lives in assisting those who had been struck with plague.

Our holy servant of God survived his attack of this frightful malady, in order to render to religion greater services: while it lasted his patience erected new trophies to the Divine glory, for he suffered extremely and yet without a murmur or complaint, without a wish to live or a fear to die. He left himself entirely in the hands of God, and when restored to health resumed his occupations in the hospital, like a rivulet which continues its course when all the impediments are removed. Nor did he discontinue his labours until the exterminating angel had sheathed his sword; it was then, and not till then, that the holy man returned to his convent. He carried with him the grateful thanks of the inhabitants of Montoro, and the people of the neighbouring villages came out to meet him as he proceeded homeward, their admiration of his virtue surmounting their fear of contagion. He received them most graciously; but not wishing to lose time by the way, proceeded to his beloved monastery, where the religious expected him with all the pious eagerness inspired by charity.

CHAPTER V.

ST. FRANCIS BEGS LEAVE TO GO INTO BARBARY; HE IS REFUSED, BUT SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING PERMISSION TO PROCEED TO AMERICA.

THE superiors of St. Francis of Solano, perhaps because of the great edification he everywhere gave, removed him frequently. Soon after his return to the convent of St. Francis of the Mount, he was ordered to that of St. Lewis, near Granada. He joyfully proceeded thither, notwithstanding his preference for the sweet solitude which he left, obeying blindly for love of Him who obeyed unto the death of the cross. But in changing his residence, he changed not his religious practices; for he invariably remained with Mary at the feet of Jesus, however busily engaged, like Martha, in serving Him in His members.

The famous hospital reared by the blessed John of God now became the theatre of his charity: to it he went, as often as he could get permission from his superior, to assist the sick, making the beds, administering remedies to the soul as well as the body by hearing confessions, &c. in the various wards of this great receptacle of human infirmities.

The prisons too were hallowed by his visits, and blessed by his services; his kindness and sympathy for the poor persons confined in them being manifested in word and deed. Thus not a

moment was spent without the exercise of good works. But perceiving that many began to entertain for him great esteem, Francis, apprehensive that pride might arrest him in the midst of his career, formed the design of leaving the localities in which he was known, and of seeking other places where he would be likely to suffer, and be despised for God. With this view he eagerly solicited permission to pass into Barbary, there to instruct, serve, and console the slaves, and, if necessary, even to shed his blood for Christ; but he could not obtain this license from his superiors, who judged that his presence was of great utility in the province, and were moreover unwilling to deprive themselves of the benefits of his example.

But soon Divine Providence furnished him with the means of executing his design. It was customary with the kings of Spain to send Franciscan Fathers to America from time to time; and Philip II., the reigning monarch, just then besought a supply of these holy missionaries from the superiors. Knowing this, St. Francis was one of the first to get himself appointed for the mission, which having done, no entreaty or argument of friend or relative, however dear, could change his purpose.

Having inquired in what part of the Indies there was most want of evangelical labourers, and learning that it was Tucuman, one of the most remote in South America, he entreated F. Balthegar Navarro, who was appointed commissary to these remote and extensive countries,

to allow him to accompany him, leaving the other religious in Nicaragua, Lima, and elsewhere.

The Franciscans have laboured most efficiently in planting the faith in the New World. F. Platus, of the holy Society of Jesus, relates in his book on the religious state, that at the first voyage Columbus made for its discovery in 1493, several friars accompanied him to bear the light of the Gospel to those idolatrous nations. After they had landed in an island discovered during the preceding year, mass was celebrated by F. John Piretio, a Franciscan of the province of Andalusia, and on the spot on which his first sacrifice was offered, a convent was built in honour of St. Francis in process of time.

When Don Ferdinand Cortez followed up this enterprise in the time of Charles V., Pope Leo X. issued a missionary brief, authorising F. Francis of the Angels, and F. John Glapion, both provincials of the holy order of St. Francis, to proceed to the conversion of the infidels. Neither undertook the charge, the latter having died in Spain, and the other being elected general; but he deputed others in his place, who laboured so successfully, that Surius says they converted in the kingdom of Mexico alone more than seven millions. The first archbishop appointed from among them, F. John Zumaraga, wrote to the general chapter held at Toulouse in the year 1531, that the new apostles had destroyed more than twenty thousand idols, pulled down more than five hundred idolatrous temples, built several churches, erected in all places the standard of the cross,

and that instead of the twenty thousand little children annually slain in honour of those false divinities in the city of Mexico alone, the new converts offered their young offspring to the true and living God, and thanked Him with all fervour and sincerity for having, by means of the Franciscan Fathers, called them from the darkness of paganism "to the admirable light" of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. FRANCIS OF SOLANO EMBARKS FOR THE INDIES; HE SUFFERS SHIPWRECK, AND FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IS IN DANGER OF PERISHING.

In the year of our Lord 1589 the blessed Francis sailed from his native shore, to become the parent of many children in Christ in the vast and newly-discovered continent of America. During the voyage, though his greatest delight was to commune with God in the secret of his soul, yet he exercised charity towards all, preaching, catechising, hearing confessions, and endeavouring by frequent repetition to impress on the minds and hearts of the crew and passengers this true and solemn maxim, "*It is better to die, than to commit a mortal sin.*"

Without staying sail, the fleet safely arrived within two leagues of St. Domingo. Francis, in company with some others, went on shore in a shalloop, but not being able to return to the ship, this smaller vessel being too heavily laden

with the provisions laid in at the above island, he was obliged to remain with a few persons until it should come back, which did not take place until the night was far advanced. While awaiting it, fancying himself already in those regions in which he was to exercise his zeal, the holy man was so inflamed with divine love that he could not restrain his transports. "Ah Lord," did he say, "the time is come for the accomplishment of my desires; be pleased to grant me the favour of dying for you; do bestow upon me the crown of martyrdom." Then he raised his arms on high, clasped his hands, and commenced singing the praises of Jesus and Mary in so loud a strain, that those who were with him became alarmed, and implored him to be silent, lest the wild inhabitants, attracted from their mountain fastnesses by the noise, might descend and destroy them.

All reached the vessel next morning, the shalloop having made a second trip to the island; the fleet then resumed its course, and having made Carthagena, and recruited itself for some days, it continued its way to Porto Bello, where the Spanish galleons were used to land. All disembarked here, each person going to his particular destination; the blessed Francis with the father commissary proceeding to Panama. While awaiting an opportunity of passing on to Peru, S. Solano resumed such of the exercises of the religious life as he had been for some time compelled by circumstances to intermit. To be more closely united with God, he resolved to have

no other cell than the church of the convent; so placing in a corner the bundle of rushes which served him for a bed, and a log of wood for a pillow, he there spent his days and nights under the eyes of God with infinite delight and consolation, and never left the precincts of the convent save to visit the hospital.

An opportunity of proceeding to his destination having occurred, he re-embarked with some others. For some time the passage was favourable, but as the vessel neared the Gulf of Gorgona, a violent tempest arose which stranded her. As the water entered through the many openings then made in her keel and sides, all on board perceived that shipwreck was inevitable; so that the captain at once betook himself to the shalloop, with the religious and other persons of distinction. S. Francis of Solano declined all invitation to follow them and share in their safety; for seeing among those who remained on the wreck, eighty negroes newly arrived from the coast of Guinea, the greater number of whom were not yet baptised, he remained with them, though his destruction thereby seemed unavoidable. In this purpose he was supported by the example of Jesus Christ, who "having joy proposed unto Him, endured the cross," for the sake of men, "despising the shame." After the shalloop had sailed, he catechised these poor creatures as well as the circumstances would permit; and having soon after baptised them at their unanimous request, they were speedily put in possession of their portion of eternal inheri-

tance, a wave having split the vessel, and the greater number of them being drowned. Such of the crew as remained on the poop were, though in comparative safety, afraid every moment of going to the bottom. But Francis, to reanimate their courage, took a crucifix in his hand, and uncovering his shoulders, disciplined himself to blood, loudly imploring in the meantime the Divine mercy. Still the danger continued, so that many threw themselves on planks into the sea, rather than hazard as they thought certain destruction. They entreated the holy man to accompany them, but he would not listen to it, certain as he assured the persons that remained, that in three days they should, if they had confidence in God, be rescued from danger. This period was spent without eating or sleeping, for besides that the provisions had been lost, several were up to the middle, and some even to the neck in water; but still they were so affected by the pious conversation of S. Solano, that as they themselves subsequently testified before the ecclesiastical judges, they spent all the time in great conformity to the Divine will, and wonderful interior consolation.

The shalloop too had very nearly been swallowed in the waves; it was only by dint of swimming that those who took refuge in her got to shore. Still they considered themselves fortunate, compared with those whom they had left in the ship, and whom they gave up for lost; but after two days perceiving a signal fire, and recognizing thereby that the wreck was not yet sub-

merged, they dispatched the shalloop to their rescue.

On arriving where the ship lay, tears of joy and pity were shed on both sides. S. Solano was the last to leave the wreck; he saw all safe in the shalloop before he consulted for his own deliverance, so disinterested is true charity, and thanked God for having freed them from imminent peril at the time he had foreshown, after having exercised them in the practice of the virtues of confidence and holy conformity.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. FRANCIS TARRIES FOR THREE MONTHS IN A DESERT ISLAND. HE ARRIVES AT PERU, WHENCE HE PASSES TO THE PROVINCES OF TUCUMAN.

St. Francis and his companions had still much to suffer; on shore as well as at sea the Lord was pleased to try them, for the place of landing was a desert island, where no human assistance was to be had. But the prayers of this saintly man were most efficacious in their regard. Being tormented by hunger, they fell upon any thing in the shape of food which came to hand, and in their eagerness eat some species of fruit which fell from the trees; but it proved fatal to them, perhaps because taken immoderately, for several, after becoming greatly swollen, died in the course of the following day. This accident greatly afflicting St. Solano, he absolutely for-

bade them to touch this fruit, and gathering some herbs and little fishes, and other marine substances, he blessed them, and distributed a portion to each.

For the space of two months that they abode in this inhospitable isle, charity transformed him into every shape for the service of those persons, and rarely was he to be seen satisfying his own wants. Tents being formed of the branches of trees in proportion to the number requiring accommodation, one of these frail edifices was by the Saint destined for an oratory, which he took care to decorate with the silks and other valuable materials that the sea from time to time cast on shore from their wrecked vessel. When all was ready, an altar was raised therein, on which having placed a statue of the most holy Virgin, public prayers commenced, to be offered there daily, which exercises were concluded by the chaunting of the Salve Regina every night.

Like Moses, who retired apart from the people to converse more freely with God, S. Francis erected his tent about 500 paces distant from the others; but he never failed to interrupt his close and delightful communications with the Most High, and, like his prototype, to descend from the mountain whenever it was necessary for the spiritual or temporal health of his little flock.

A quarrel having arisen amongst them concerning some pieces of stuff, the cargo of their former vessel, cast in by the sea, they took up arms and were proceeding to fight for the booty, when the saint receiving intimation, came forth

from his tent, his shoulders bared, and casting himself in the midst, besought them to stop for the love of God, and began disciplining himself to blood as a further inducement. The chiefs of the party at once cast down their weapons, and prostrating themselves before him constituted him the arbiter of their different claims, and promised thenceforward to live in peace.

This was their last, if not their first, quarrel; the remaining time was spent in harmony and concord, though they must have suffered immensely during their sojourn in this inhospitable clime; for though F. Navarro had sailed thence in the shalloop upon their arrival, he had 100 leagues' voyaging before he could regain his destination, Panama, and could, therefore, afford them no help or succour. The holy festival of Christmas was now at hand, and brought to them, as to the shepherds of old, tidings of joy and deliverance; for on that ever-blessed night on which the Lord Jesus was born for us in Bethlehem, their holy guide, descending from his tent, came in the midst of them, and, enraptured with ecstasy, predicted that in three days a vessel would come to their assistance. This good news increased the fervour with which they celebrated the joyous solemnity: need we say that the prophecy was verified? at the exact time predicted the vessel did arrive by order of the royal chamber of Panama, and the whole company being taken on board, they joyfully crowded sail, and were soon landed at Payta, a sea-port of Peru. S. Francis proceeded thence by land to Lima, the

ordinary residence then of the Spanish viceroys; but after a short stay, in which he recovered in in some degree from his recent fatigues, he pursued his journey to Tucuman, the immense provinces of which he knew to be in more extreme want of missionaries. That to which he directed his course was named Socoton, situate about 700 leagues from Lima; the way to it lay through frightful deserts, intercepted by rapid rivers, but nothing was insurmountable to his apostolic spirit; desiring only to increase the Divine glory by the conversion of innumerable souls to God, he looked upon difficulties only to animate himself to overcome them.

Here we would fain remark on that zeal to increase the Divine honour which animates many, and which may be truly characterized an effect of ardent love and charity. How does it burst the bonds of natural affection, rend human ties, and make men insensible to peril and danger, to fly to unknown and barbarous countries, destitute of aid and support, in order to instruct the savage, to cultivate the uncivilized, to teach the inhabitants of the wigwam and of the forest to know God and His Son Jesus Christ! Well, indeed, may those who are devoted to this glorious work be styled Apostles, Heroes of Christianity. Let us esteem their intrepidity, if we have not courage to imitate it; let us labour for the conversion of sinners, if we have not zeal enough to preach the Gospel to infidels; let us, each one in his own sphere, endeavour to gain to Christ those souls whom He has pur-

chased with His blood, whether by good advice, timely admonition, zealous instruction, or firm and edifying example.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST EMPLOYMENT OF S. FRANCIS AT TUCUMAN.

To the children of the seraphic Francis of Assisium, are the rich and fertile countries, watered by the river Plata, indebted for the light of salvation. The first who planted the good seed in these vast regions was F. Lewis Bolanos, who going thither while as yet only deacon, learned the language of the country, translated into it the elements of the Christian belief, and converted a great number of infidels. He also translated the Catechism of the Council of Lima, which was subsequently printed in five languages by another Franciscan, afterwards bishop of the imperial city of Chili.

To F. Bolanos succeeded an Andalusian F. Alphonsus of S. Bonaventure, who was himself followed by the saintly subject of our narrative, S. Francis Solano, from the same province. On his arrival he was appointed Rector of Socoton and Magdalen of Cocosori, both in the vicinity of Esteco; but before exercising his ministry to any great extent, he had to study the Indian language, or the patois, called the Toconote. He succeeded in it wonderfully, so much so, that his proficiency, which was the

amazement of his companion, F. A. Diaz, was attributed by the natives to magic.

This provision made, he applied himself to preaching, catechising, and hearing the confessions of his flock. Looking upon his charge of rector, not as a means of living at his ease, but an obligation to work more laboriously, he omitted no one of his many accustomed austerities. The consequence was, that in a short time he became so feeble and emaciated, that he could scarcely stand. Though weakened to this degree, he took the greatest precautions for his virtue, forbidding women to approach within a hundred paces of his habitation, and never conversing with the sex, save in the holy tribunal, or when other religious duty required it.

The savages whom he found converted, he led to the practice of Christian perfection by his exhortations and heroic example; and those who had not yet received the faith, he sought out in their woods and forests, when divine grace did not lead them to come and seek for instruction. Heaven seconded his exertions; for in a short time these barbarians became familiar with him, and as he spoke their language perfectly, numbers of them, laying aside their natural ferocity, submitted to the gospel, and soon led many of their savage acquaintances to the faith.

The following admirable incident occurred while S. Francis was thus making progress in his holy design. Having learned that during Holy Week the new Christians would be quite occupied in pious exercises, the still unconverted

tribes assembled in vast numbers as well from Paraguay as from Tucuman, and made a descent on Socoton, where the Saint lived, designing to massacre all who might fall in their way. Taken by surprise the Christians had but time to recur to God, beseeching Him to succour them; but their holy apostle with more generosity advanced to meet the savages, and having by supernatural power arrested their onward course, he made them so moving a sermon on the Passion of our Divine Lord, and exhorted them so earnestly to embrace his holy religion, that on that day more than nine thousand of their number received baptism. In proof of the sincerity of their conversion, many of them took a severe discipline on that same night in common with the other Christians, in memory of our Saviour's cruel scourging. This extraordinary event inspired the Indians with such great veneration for the Saint, that many, forsaking their woods and deserts, came to solicit instruction; others cast themselves at his feet when they chanced to meet him; many more respectfully kissed his hand, or made him little presents. Availing himself of these good sentiments, he spoke to them with sweetness, zeal, and charity, testifying on all occasions his great pity for their ignorance and their spiritual miseries. No wonder that by these sweet and powerful means he succeeded in civilizing those savage creatures, since he was able to tame wild beasts. One day that the governor of the city of S. Michael, Don John Velasquez, treated the people to a bull fight, a

sport of which Spaniards are extremely fond, a furious bull after goring several Indians in the course, broke down the barriers, and rushing madly on, encountered in its way Father Solano: a witness of his imminent danger, the governor called for assistance; but the Saint, quite undaunted, waited for the animal, which approaching gently, as if to fawn upon him, licked his cincture, and passed on without molesting him, to the great joy and admiration of all the beholders.

On another occasion encountering a bull pursued by hunters, he cast himself on his knees and joined his hands; the animal coming up, threw himself on his fore feet, and having, as it were, kissed his holy hands, fled from his pursuers. These are extraordinary circumstances, but we read of many such in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert. Besides it is a principle of theology, that the revolt of irrational creatures against man, is a consequence of man's rebellion against his Maker; and from the same holy source we learn too, that the most furious animals have often manifested the original submission and tameness of the species, towards those in whom the disorders of Adam's sin had been fully repaired.

CHAPTER IX.

S. FRANCIS SOLANO MAKES SOME JOURNEYS IN TUCUMAN; HE SIGNALIZES HIS VIRTUE IN ALL PLACES.

Fraternal charity being a participation in the infinite love of God, has no bounds or limits. That of S. Francis Solano was so far from being satisfied with bestowing all manner of care on the persons confided to his spiritual conduct, that he undertook several journeys in the vicinity of Socoton, signalizing himself by miracles.

Journeying with several others from S. Michael to S. James del Estero, he came to the bank of a river, where he found many wanting to go across, and utterly unable, because they had not a boat, and it was not safe to swim. Another difficulty too presented itself; the horses on which they road were so tormented by flies, that they occasioned great annoyance. Chagrin was the prevailing sentiment throughout the assemblage; but the Saint consoled them by saying, that at nine o'clock next morning they would be able to cross the river. Meantime he prayed, and in a moment the horses became quiet; he afterwards cast a line which he had brought into the river, and having caught a fish sufficiently large to regale his companions, he distributed it among them, contenting himself with a few grains of corn. Next morning witnessed the accomplishment of his prediction; at the hour mentioned, the river becoming passable, the com-

pany proceeded on their way, blessed God, and thanked His servant whom He made the instrument of His mercies.

Arriving at S. James's, they found the place torn by dissensions, and the various parties ready to pull each other to pieces through mutual hatred. The holy man shed tears at this sad state of things, and at once exerted every means to appease the public mind, and in this he happily succeeded before those with whom he journeyed had arranged their business.

Returning from Paraguay to Tucuman, a great drought was experienced; for three days there was not a single drop of water to be had to quench the thirst of the travellers, at which some soldiers of the party blasphemed the holy Name of God. As we may well imagine, S. Solano was greatly afflicted at this outrage against the Divine Majesty, and in his anxiety to put an end to it, as well as to relieve his more Christian fellow-travellers, he besought the Most High in their favour, and sending a religious of the Order of Mercy, who was with them, to a hillock at a short distance designated most precisely, the fountain was discovered under a stone, which being removed the waters flowed down the plain, and continued their course for centuries after.

The opening of the fountain of Talavera, since called the fountain of Holy Father Solano, is still more wonderful. The inhabitants of this latter, which was then annexed to Socoton, and consequently under the spiritual care of this Saint,

being in great need of water, and having found every human effort to procure it unavailing, determined to abandon the locality, and seek a habitation elsewhere. Before proceeding to such extremity, however, they recurred to S. Solano, who after exhorting them to confidence in God, engaged that they should find a fountain near the town. Then betaking himself to prayer for some hours, he proceeded to a spot in the vicinity accompanied by many, and commanded them to open and dig up the earth; having done so, a source of sweet and limpid water was seen to issue forth so abundantly, that it sufficed to turn two mills.

All these circumstances were subsequently attested to Don Francesco Alfaro, Consultor of the Holy Office, when he visited the province, as he juridically declared, 26th October, 1628, in aid of the cause of the beatification of St. Francis Solano.

CHAPTER X.

ST. FRANCIS IS APPOINTED SUPERIOR OF ALL THE CONVENTS OF HIS ORDER IN TUCUMAN; HE IS AFTERWARDS SENT TO THE CONVENT OF RETREAT AT LIMA.

It is not to be wondered at, that St. Solano's missionary labours were distinguished by so many miracles, since he performed them in so apostolic a manner. Lima, the capital of Peru, is six hun-

dred or seven hundred leagues from Tucuman, and the road between them, through high mountains and sandy vales, where beasts of burden often die of heat and fatigue; vast deserts, frightful forests, here and there intersected by rapid torrents; worse still, this toilsome way was infested by barbarians more ferocious than the fiercest animals. In Tucuman itself the cities are very remote one from another; hence, no one undertakes to travel on foot. But Francis, who had come without horse or purse from Lima to this extensive territory, journeyed through it invariably on foot. In the performance of missionary duties, three years did he pass there; after that period, F. Anthony Ortiz, commissary of the provinces of Peru, having assembled a chapter of the Franciscans in the valley of Xauxa, F. Solano, whose merit was well known, was elected superior of all the missions and convents of the order in Tucuman. There not being a sufficient number of the latter in the country to erect it into a province, St. Francis was simply styled Guardian, but with all the authority and duties of provincial. He was greatly surprised at his election, judging himself utterly unworthy of being chosen: obedience alone compelled him to accept the dignity. However, he contrived to lay it down in a year, which period he spent in visiting his convents, in exhorting the fathers who governed the different parishes to be careful of their flock, the missionary preachers to make moving and affecting discourses, the catechists not to be satisfied in

teaching the Christian doctrine to those who prepresented themselves, but to go in search of those who despised it, and to expose their lives to gain souls to God.

These public functions did not interfere in the least with his pious exercises; the entire night he devoted partly to prayer, partly to bloody disciplines. He used the roughest hair cloths, and never indulged any thing like mirth or unseemly laughter; as he desired nothing so ardently as to see God honoured, known, and loved, his conversation generally tended to lead the faithful never to commit mortal sin, and the infidels to be converted. The Franciscans here were delighted to be under his government, but it was enough for him to be superior, not to remain long in his post. Elevation was a state of violence for him, the weight of his humility causing him invariably to descend from it. He wrote, he entreated, he urged to that degree, that F. Ortiz, overcome by his desires, received his renunciation of the guardianship. Still it was only on condition that F. Solano should proceed to the retreat convent of Lima, recently established by F. Andrew Corço, an estimable religious; to this, however, our Saint had no objection, forasmuch as he was by the appointment flying from the extraordinary honours paid him at every step in Tucuman.

He proceeded to Lima as soon as possible; and though greatly exhausted by the rigours of penance he faced the toils of this journey with incredible gladness, as he now hoped to remain hidden and despised in the retreat convent.

The Spaniards and newly converted Indians at Tucuman deeply felt his loss; they ardently desired to preserve among them their father in the faith, their model, their Saint; and hence, their complaints against F. Ortiz for permitting his departure. Not satisfied with venting themselves in word, they proceeded to write to this father on the subject, and so forcibly, that he resolved to send them back their apostle, and would have done so had it not been represented to him, that St. Solano was unfit for the journey, his health was so broken. The Saint then remained at the convent of Lima, still applying himself to religious exercises, and not allowing nature peace or truce. He was disappointed in his hope of eluding honours by this change of abode, but he should for that end have altogether divested himself of his virtue, a thing not to be thought of.

Almost immediately upon his arrival at Lima, the very fervent religious chosen from out the province to be the foundation of the reformed house of our Lady of Angels, looked upon themselves as novices compared with F. Solano. They at once desired him for their superior; but as his consent could not be procured, he was at least obliged to accept the charge of vicar of this convent; and he did not despise this subordinate office in a new house, though formerly so elevated in one more ancient and venerable, such was his humility. Proposing to himself nothing but the glory of God, the good of religon, and his own salvation, he on the one hand exactly

obeyed the father guardian, as holding the place of God, and on the other was most precise in fulfilling every function of his office.

After his example the greatest men have been and are still willing to discharge the lowest offices in religion. In effect, there is no post dishonourable "in the house of the Lord;" every thing that we do there derives value from the contract made with Him; actions, the merit of which appears as nought in the eyes of the world, are thus enhanced through the mercy of God; He accepts them because done for His love, and finally crowns them with eternal bliss.

CHAPTER XI.

PIOUS EXERCISES OF S. FRANCIS DURING HIS FOUR YEARS' SOJOURN AT OUR LADY OF ANGELS IN LIMA.

God promises to recompense the humiliations of His servants by honours, their poverty by riches, their mortifications by pleasures, but their devotion He cannot reward, save by increasing it, nor their love, but by augmenting it, there being nothing better than the love which we bear Him, and "the eternal charity" wherewith He mutually cherishes us.

Hitherto we have spoken of the austerities of S. Francis Solano. It is true that we could have intermixed with them many acts which were the result of ardent devotion and tender love, but we prefer collecting them in one chapter, that, being

consecutively read, they may sustain one another, and the Christian learn thus to respect what infidels blaspheme.

The principal devotion of this holy man was the most holy Sacrament of the altar; hence, the long hours which he spent before it, for he preferred the sanctuary to his cell. He beheld our Divine Lord under the mystic veil, as if that veil had been withdrawn, and that he contemplated Him face to face. Sometimes the tenderness of his love burst forth in most passionate words, in amorous and inflamed expressions; at other times, bathed in tears, he sung canticles in praise of the Divine Object of his affections. In the choir while chaunting the office, he addressed the fervent and inspired verses of the Psalms to his hidden Lord; and his devotion in celebrating the holy mysteries was so great that the assistants were sensibly affected by it. One day in presence of the viceroy of Peru, Don Louis de Velasco, who often served his mass, the Saint being vested and on the point of proceeding to the altar, was suddenly seized with such devotion and ecstatic love, that, unable to contain himself, he began to sing the praises of the Son of God. Don Louis was moved to tears at the sight, and when the rapture ceased served the mass as usual.

As God never suffers Himself to be outdone in generosity, He was pleased to manifest by evident signs how pleasing to Him were the deeds of His holy servant. He was sometimes seen, when going to the altar, preceded by a

brilliant light, which led him, as it were, to the sanctuary; at other times he became so enraptured during the sacred mysteries, that it was supposed he would not be able to finish them. The moment the holy sacrifice was terminated, he withdrew to his cell, lest any one should witness the favours he received from God. It chanced one day that the superior sent for him after mass, and the religious who went for him found him with his cheeks and cowl bedewed with tears, and his countenance shining with light and brightness.

No wonder that when he was distinguished by such marks of the Divine favour, S. Francis was honoured by men, and placed by the superiors in office, despite of his great repugnance. In the year 1595, F. John of Monte Mayor, commissary of Peru, and then newly arrived from Spain, appointed him guardian of the convent of our Lady of Angels. This dignity was for him a new mortification, and to counterbalance the honour thereby conferred upon him, this holy man devised several new and humiliating practices. Sometimes he came into the refectory without his cowl, confessing that he was unworthy of wearing the habit of S. Francis. At other times he extended himself across the door of the choir, or again of the refectory, that the religious might step over him. Now he entered the refectory with a reed in his mouth, to show that he was, like it, dry, fragile, and empty of good works; and then he would rise up during the repast, and kiss the feet of the assembled religious with profound self-abasement

With this unfavourable opinion of himself, he entertained the highest esteem for his brethren. On one occasion he thus expressed himself to a religious in whom he had much confidence; "Never judge ill of any one, my brother; never be scandalized at anything, but what is evidently bad. If you see two religious conversing together, imagine that they are talking of something pious, something divine, such as the greatness of God. If you perceive them eat out of time, persuade yourself that they have special need of it. If you witness them walking precipitately, think that they do so to appear contemptible in the eyes of men, while their virtues exalt them in the eyes of God."

These charitable sentiments of the blessed Saint did not prevent his watching over his subjects, nor hinder him from correcting them when they deserved reproof. He so ardently desired their perfection, that perceiving them too intent on cultivating the trees in the garden, he had them rooted up, thereby to place his spiritual children in the happy necessity of devoting themselves solely to prayer. He was greatly afflicted when the inhabitants of Lima caused a beautiful alley to be planted near the convent; fearing much that the concourse of seculars on that promenade should disturb the silence of the sweet convent of our Lady, and draw thither many visitors, who only serve, generally speaking, to dissipate the spirit of retreat and recollection in religious houses. This sentiment was so strong, that increasing his repugnance to the

guardianship, he presented the resignation of his office with so many tears and sighs, that F. John Monte Mayor was obliged in pity to accept it. No doubt he had some idea of re-establishing him in this charge at the chapter held in March, 1598; but the Saint having intimation of it, fled to perform missionary duty for the time in a certain parish, although the heat was then so intense that he thought he should die on the road. When recalled by the superiors, he entreated them so earnestly that he obtained permission to retire to the convent of Truxillo, about eighty leagues from Lima.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. FRANCIS GOES TO TRUXILLO, AND THERE ASSISTS A POOR LEPROUS WOMAN. HE PREDICTS THE RUIN OF THE CITY, WHICH EVENT FOLLOWS SOME TIME AFTER.

A TRULY humble soul is a spectacle worthy of God. The Church has ever looked with veneration upon those who, from a feeling of self-contempt, fled from honours, and declares in her holy canons, that the first proof that one merits ecclesiastical dignities, is to be interiorly persuaded that he does not deserve them.

St. Francis Solano was all through life impressed with this conviction, so that he was ever seeking legitimate reasons for being dispen-

sed from charges and offices. But as superiors are obliged to place authority in the hands of those most fit to exercise it, they incessantly contradicted his humble repugnance, sometimes employing for that end motives of justice or of fitness, and sometimes again that of obedience, which to him was irresistible. The provincials seemed, as it were, the enemies of his repose; for whenever a new commissary general arrived from Spain, which happened once in every six years, new contradictions awaited the humble Father Solano.

Though F. Monte Mayor had set his heart on having our Saint elected provincial of the province of Lima, even from the time of his arrival, yet he was ultimately compelled to suffer him to retire to Truxillo, where all that F. Venido, the succeeding commissary, did to keep him in office, was to defer sending a guardian to the convent for a year or two, so as that Father Solano should be resident or superior *in the interim.*

We have already remarked on his great love for the poor, and detailed his charitable deeds in the hospitals. He continued this exercise with all possible assiduity at Truxillo. He was observed to go out sometimes with his sleeves filled with provisions, and to carry them to a poor woman afflicted with leprosy, who abode outside the city. In this distressed creature he beheld an image of our Lord, "*who was, as it were, a leper;*" and imitated St. Francis, his holy father, who had a particular grace for succouring persons thus diseased by his sweet and charitable words and de-

portment. In these pious practices he sometimes experienced as much consolation as in prayer, to which he was ever deeply applied.

A religious, very distinguished in the province, having once retired after matins to a chapel of the choir, perceived F. Solano enter the church about three o'clock in the morning, where after remaining standing for about a quarter of an hour before the Blessed Sacrament, with his arms extended in form of a cross, he lovingly exclaimed, "Ah, Lord, who can be unfortunate enough to offend you! Who, my God, can determine to do that!" Then prostrating on the ground, arms still extended, he remained there so long, that the religious, for fear of disturbing him, cautiously stole out of the church. F. Francis d' Otalora, then provincial, declared before the commissaries of the holy see, that he learned at his visitation many things which caused F. Francis Solano to pass for a Saint, not only in the convent and city of Truxillo, but throughout the whole country.

Among other singular favours which God bestowed upon his servant, there was that of prophesying the destruction of Truxillo. It happened in this wise. In the year 1603, on the 11th day of December, while preaching the panegyric of St. Didacus, whose feast was on that day celebrated in the church of the convent, after alluding to the crimes of his auditors, he felt himself suddenly inspired, and, like our divine Lord, who declared of Jerusalem, that *one stone should not be left upon another*, he declared that in punishment of their iniquities, their city should be

destroyed, houses and inhabitants; that even of the church in which he was preaching, nothing should remain but the pulpit he then occupied.

Terrified at this prediction, some of the people left Truxillo, among others Don Diego Sanchez, and his wife, Mary of Ortega; nor were they without cause to congratulate themselves upon following the Saint's advice, for on the 14th of February, 1618, fifteen years subsequent to the prophecy, and eight years after the decease of St. Solano, Truxillo was totally destroyed by an earthquake; not a house remained standing, the churches and monasteries were involved in the general ruin, the very animals perished in their stalls, and of the inhabitants not one escaped the catastrophe.

The anger of God was here indeed very apparent; for the rocks and mountains in the vicinity were so shaken, that large portions of stone becoming detached from them, fell with such violence as to crush many of the citizens, who took refuge upon the public road outside the devoted city.

The principal biographer of our Saint says, that this awful visitation was occasioned by the sins of Truxillo, particularly its want of respect towards priests and religious, who are the spouses of Jesus Christ: but it belongs to the Divine Author of such fearful punishments to decide the cause, and it should be the part of sinful man to do nothing which would provoke His wrath and indignation.

It only remains to say here, that so literally

was the prophecy fulfilled, that the pulpit from which it was uttered remained intact, though the walls of the church tumbled, and the roof fell in. Mary d' Ortega, who had left it, as we have said, unfortunately returned in consequence of the inconveniences which she had to endure at Lima, her new residence, and met the stroke with those who had taken no precaution, for she was suffocated by the dust, and perished with her slaves under the ruins of her old mansion.

We here pass over several other predictions of the saint during his abode at Truxillo, as well as many extraordinary things which occurred to him in his service of the neighbours and conduct of souls, because they are of the same nature as the foregoing, or may incidentally fall in with the suite of our little history.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. FRANCIS RETURNS TO LIMA, AND BY HIS PREACHING LEADS THE INHABITANTS TO PENANCE.

Supposing that having consented to the superiority at Truxillo, S. Solano might be found as complying, should the guardianship of our Lady of Angels be again committed to him, the fathers of the province determined to impose upon him the honourable, but to him, onerous burden. He submitted, but held it only four months, during which short time he renounced it in form eleven times, so that they despaired of ever more seeing

him in any charge. Before leaving this house for the principal convent of the order in Lima, he asked pardon of the religious for his bad example; and having taken off his habit, besought them to give him the discipline, in expiation of his faults. He told them that he resigned his office, because he judged himself unworthy of governing, and shed withal such abundance of tears, that the community shared in his deep emotion.

It was while he held this last guardianship that the following incident took place: there are few such instances recorded in history. One evening in the month of December, in the year 1604, after having prayed for some time with extraordinary fervour, he left the convent inflamed with the fire of heavenly zeal, saying to the porter, "*Pray for me, brother, for I am going out to render God a great service.*" Proceeding then to the most public part of the city, and having, as was his wont, assembled the people, he began to enlarge on the crimes committed within their walls; threatened them with the Divine wrath in terms so awful, exhorted them to penance by such powerful reasons, that the auditory were seized with extreme fright and consternation, and left the sermon, persuaded that if they did not at once appease the Divine indignation, Lima would be erased from the cities of the New World, before the next evening's sun had set.

Nor was this terror destined to be confined to the auditory. Dispersing homewards, they communicated it throughout the city: men were seen

running through the streets, exclaiming with affright, "Father Solano has just announced that Lima will be destroyed this very night!" So great was the importance attached to the words of the servant of God, that the emotion soon became general. From the streets the news passed to the houses, thence to the monasteries, so that the whole city was involved in confusion, every one relying on the holy man's prediction, and therefore desirous to make his confession.

The churches were left open during the entire night; the holy Sacrament was exposed in almost every one of them; and the priests, after having set their own consciences in order, remained until next day reconciling to God those who presented themselves. Some who could not get near them from the crowds, confessed their sins aloud, that they might secure absolution; others struck their breasts, imploring the Divine mercy; more took the discipline with iron chains, and other sharp instruments; while a fourth bore on their shoulders into the church heavily laden crosses. Restitutions were made liberally; reconciliations seemed to cost nothing; and if the poor had not been persuaded equally with the rich, that they should all perish that night, they might have collected treasures, heaps of wealth being left about as so much useless lumber.

The sighs and groans uttered on that remarkable night are inconceivable; all ages, all sexes, all ranks and professions, deeming immediate ruin inevitable. There was no one found to gainsay or contradict the idea; but morning having

dawned, the viceroy of Peru assembled the council, and the archbishop of Lima being in attendance, it was determined to make inquiry of St. Solano, through his superior, F. Venido, into the cause of his preaching in the terms he did, as well as upon the extraordinary results thereby produced.

In compliance with his decree F. Venido summoned the Saint into his presence. On his way to the superior's quarter, a religious, who was apprehensive that he should be reprimanded, exhorted him not to be afraid; to which the holy man replied, "You must know, brother, that I preached by the command of God." He found the father commissary assisted by several religious and some of the principal inhabitants, and he declared to them that it was because the crimes of the inhabitants of Lima appeared to him very considerable, that he spoke of them so forcibly; that he simply applied his text, "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life," (St. James ch. ii.,) to the state of the souls of his auditors, declaring that they were devoured by impurity, avarice, and pride; that he used the comparison of a ruined city, to enlighten them as to the state into which they would fall; that he had forcibly exhorted them to anticipate it by prompt and sincere repentance: but as for the extraordinary consequences which followed, he had nothing to do with them; they were produced by God. He afterwards repeated certain passages of his sermon to them, which

frightened them so much, that they since acknowledged their hair stood erect, so that is to be presumed, they saw at once it was the operation of God's Spirit speaking by the mouth of His servant.

The father commissary having caused him to sign a declaration to the foregoing effect, it was by the authority of the viceroy and archbishop published in all the churches, to quiet, if possible, the public mind, still possessed with the notion of impending destruction; but in vain, the terror and alarm still continued, so that the king's representative declared aloud, "Let us not trouble ourselves any further about this matter. It is the work of God, who employed this means to soften the obduracy of men's hearts, and lead them to penance."

Different judgments were formed upon this surprising event. Some admired the force of the word of God in the mouth of a holy man; others marvelled that an entire congregation should take the allegorical for the literal sense; while more conjectured that the Lord had caused the auditory to hear what He desired should move their hearts, and this without the advertence of the preacher, just as he caused the apostles to be understood on the Feast of Pentecost by men of all nations. However it may have been, much glory redounded to the Divine Majesty by this sermon. The people were so persuaded that death was nigh, that they indeed brought forth fruits worthy of true penance. Sins were discovered, hitherto concealed in confession. One

woman acknowledged publicly that her sins alone were sufficient to engulf Lima, and that the very night in which the dread calamity was expected, she had resolved to commit a crime too revolting to be named here; and a child twelve years old confessed on that fearful night a tissue of crimes so abominable, that it would seem they could have been committed only by a devil in the guise of man.

F. Augustine de Vega, since bishop of Paraguay, and then prior of the Dominican convent, had a procession of the most holy Sacrament, his religious meantime taking the discipline on this memorable occasion; and it was affirmed by F. Venido, that F. Solano preached by the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and that since the penance of Ninive, nothing was witnessed similar to what had then occurred at Lima.

CHAPTER XIV.

OTHER WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF THE PREACHING OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

Evangelical preaching is now, thanks to God, so general, that several imagine it a thing easily effected; still it must be avowed, that there are few good preachers. We shall be convinced of this if we study the fruit produced. No doubt it is usual to cast the blame of the inutility of the word of God on the hearers; and, nevertheless, it is often because of the ignorance of the preachers,

or of their little preparation for the holy ministry; or, in fine, because the auditory doubt much that they are of the number of those who say and do not. The illiterate and the lazy who exercise this sacred function, allege in excuse the simplicity of the apostolic preaching, which, plain and unadorned, converted thousands. Others compose sermons according to the rules of eloquence, and descant on the most sublime maxims of Christianity, whilst it is well known they lead dissipated worldly lives, and think it is the same thing to speak well and to persuade efficaciously. But neither produce fruit; the former serving only as a subject of ridicule, the latter as one of obduracy and scandal. To do away with the pretext for carelessness, it should be remarked, that the simple discourses of persons eminent for virtue, effect great wonders *only* because the spirit of prayer supplies that preparation derived by others from study. These friends of God frequently reflect on the practical truths of Christianity, produce in meditation ardent affections, continually look to the Sovereign Good, and in this manner acquire all things necessary to constitute an excellent preacher; so that when required to speak in public, they are never taken unprepared, their mind and heart being habitually filled with Christian truths and sentiments. And then virtue is one of the most influential means that an orator can employ to be useful to his auditory, the sentiments of a good man, as Aristotle says in his Rhetoric, serving as a law to those who hear him.

S. Solano has done many things which it would not be expedient for us to do; but his piety justified his conduct, and almost invariably were his labours crowned with success, a proof that he was inspired by God. For example: on feast days, without waiting to be asked to preach, he went out from the convent to the public squares, or to the corner of some street, and there drawing a crucifix from his sleeve, and devoutly raising it in the air, and looking upon it with eyes sparkling with love, or bathed in tears, he preached with so much force and tenderness, that sinners the most obdurate could not resist him. His wan and emaciated countenance led the most sensual to penance, his tears melted the most insensible, his words moved the most resolute in wickedness. Sometimes he would say, in a voice half stifled with sobs and groans, "Sinners! beware of offending a Saviour dead for love of us upon a cross! Adore Him, because He is Supreme Goodness, and never again crucify Him by your sins." At other times he would say, "Ah, my brethren! love God, and never offend Him more, since our Love is dead upon a cross for us." "Who would not love you, O my God, so worthy of love!" he would again repeatedly exclaim, looking upon the crucifix.

Every one considered S. Francis Solano as another S. John Baptist. Rich and poor, soldiers and artisans, assembled around him when he commenced as above at any of the thoroughfares; and when, as it often happened, he recommenced or resumed his discourse elsewhere, they followed

him in such crowds that the streets for the time became impassable.

His virtue had gained him such liberty, that he was permitted to undertake all that he wished for the glory of God. When in passing through the city he heard that dancing and revelling were going forward in any particular house, he entered with his crucifix, and besought those who were thus enjoying themselves, not to forget the Saviour, who "having joy proposed unto Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." He boldly went to those places where blasphemy and debauchery prevailed to a great extent, and there, with eyes flashing with holy zeal, and in a voice of thunder, he terrified and alarmed the unhappy inmates, so that they were glad to fly from the scene of their excesses.

He often preached three or four times in the day, and, to his credit be it spoken, the acclamations of the crowds who followed him, so far from endangering, increased his humility.

CHAPTER XV.

OTHER EXERCISES OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO DURING HIS LATTER YEARS.

The care of governing and guiding others, is sometimes a cause of shipwreck to religious virtue; for though our Lord says that those who teach and do not shall be the last in the kingdom of heaven, many go no further, but for this neg-

lect their own advancement, and stop short in the path of perfection, to acquire only what they fancy can render them useful to their neighbour. Not so S. Solano; although he effected many and remarkable things for the good of souls, he did far more for his own salvation. It could not be said of him, as of several others, "He saved others, himself he" did "not save."

To the last moment of his life he was most exact in the practice of religious virtues, so that although worn out by austerities, he was still an example in this matter to the religious of his convent of S. Francis at Lima. To the letter did he accomplish S. Paul's counsel, "Pray without intermission;" for his mind and heart were unceasingly fixed upon God. If sometimes obliged to occupy himself externally, he acquitted himself as the angels do, who, though ever employed in man's service, never lose sight of God. He went to choir at eleven o'clock at night, and remained there till four in the morning, praying all the while with admirable fervour. Often, when the religious entered the holy place, to offer the first fruits of the day to the "Ancient of days," to "the King of ages," they found him so transported with devotion, that his soul seemed to have left his body, and to have taken its flight to heaven. This was generally the case on the feasts of our Blessed Lord and our dear Lady, when he felt greater devotion.

Some religious having besought him to say upon what matter he made his prayer, so as to occupy him so long, he replied, that from eleven

o'clock until midnight he prepared to recite matins with the community, and that sacred duty ended, and the religious gone forth from the choir, he still remained thanking God for all His goodness. O what a sweet practice! one hour of preparation, and two hours of thanksgiving! The holy man experienced such sweetness in these pious exercises, that to perform them he sacrificed his repose and health. If sometimes he felt quite overpowered with sleep, he strove to keep himself awake by extraordinary disciplines; besides which he imposed upon himself the practice of two every night, one before going to choir, and the other after his prayer. To be more free at this latter exercise, he used to retire to the school in which theology was taught, and where there was a picture or image of St. Bonaventure in ecstasy before the crucifix, just as he was seen by St. Thomas of Aquin.

It was commonly before this image that our Saint expressed his sentiments of devotion for the Seraphic Doctor. He called him his "father," his "doctor," his "friend;" then addressing Jesus crucified, he besought Him with sighs and tears to inflame his heart with His divine love, that he might resemble St. Bonaventure; and to elevate himself to the similitude of Jesus suffering, he every night disciplined himself so severely that he left the pavement tinged with his blood.

The sight of this blood was a moving lesson for the young theologians, inspiring, as it did, a love of virtue. God permitted, in order that he might draw them more powerfully to perfection, that

some of them, who had hidden themselves for the purpose of observing him on those occasions, should see marvellous heavenly lights, which went in and out of the hall, and sometimes hovered about him; this was related to another religious, and the fact became known to the whole community.

Indeed there was no religious at the time in the convent of St. Francis of Lima, who did not witness the virtues of the Saint quite as much as the extraordinary favours vouchsafed to him. Sometimes he was heard to exclaim in his cell quite transported, "Who art Thou, my God, and who am I! Thou art all, and I am nothing!" At other times he was heard to say a thousand sweet things to the Divine Infant Jesus. His heart obeyed all the movements which it pleased God to communicate; it took all the forms which He was pleased to give it. But divine love was his ruling passion, or rather his principal virtue, and left him so little at liberty, that you might often enter into the cell, where he commonly remained on his knees, and be neither seen or perceived by him, so much used he to be out of himself through ecstasies of love. One day, leaning against a pillar of the cloister, a rapture seized him while contemplating a picture of St. Francis, so that all passing that quarter were eye witnesses.

A similar incident took place while preaching to the poor Clares on the Feast of the Visitation; for explaining the verse of the Magnificat, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour," he raised

his eyes and spoke admirable things of the Eternal Word and the most holy Virgin. After repeating two or three times, "my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour," his head drooped, and he remained a quarter of an hour in ecstasy, his hands resting immoveable upon the choir grate. Touched at the sight, the religious knelt to pray, until returning to himself, the Saint withdrew without continuing his discourse.

It happened another time, that preaching in the convent, he could not finish his sermon because of his tears, but these were more eloquent than words; attracting as they did the tears and groans of the auditors, and producing in them a true spirit of penance.

But what should not his sermons do, when even his conversation sufficed to convert the greatest sinners, and to deliver persons from temptations the most violent? A secular, having come to visit one of the religious, accidentally met St. Solano, who at once besought him to renounce a certain evil practice. The person denied it strongly; but the Saint persevering in detailing the place and other circumstances of the intrigue, and moreover having warned him, that if he went out next night he would be assassinated, the wicked man, confounded at seeing that actions which he believed no one knew, were quite under the cognizance of the servant of God, fell upon his knees, and before leaving the convent made a good confession, and burst for ever the hellish chain that had hitherto bound him.

On five or six different occasions, the Saint stopped at the city gates, awaiting the passage of certain persons whose names we could mention, if it were prudent, that he might tell them that they were then going to fight a duel, why, and against whom. The most violent in their wicked purpose yielded to his remonstrances: how could they resist when they saw that he read their very souls?

His words restored interior peace to two religious of his convent at Lima, one of whom was annoyed for several years with a great disgust for his holy state, and the other, uncertain of his vocation, was inclined to leave the cloister. A novice too was tormented with the same thought, and so unceasingly that it occupied him one day while serving our Saint's mass. But O! the goodness of our God! He was pleased to manifest to S. Solano the interior of the poor youth, and the Saint took occasion at the Lavabo, or washing of the hands, to whisper to him, "Take care, brother, of quitting the habit; obey not the voice of the devil, lest he deceive you." The novice heard these words as an oracle, and no longer thought of renouncing his sacred purpose.

One of the oldest preachers, a most venerable superior too, was cruelly annoyed by the devil, so that for seven years he had no cessation of horrible visions, which tormented the repose of his body and soul. Nothing relieved him; neither his own numerous pious exercises, nor the prayers of pious persons, contributed to his peace, God reserving, it would seem, this grace to S. Solano;

for from the time that this religious discovered to him his inquietudes, received his advice, and had him to pray for him, he became perfectly tranquil. Thus it was that the actions of S. Solano always tended to the Divine glory and the advantage of his neighbours.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT ST. FRANCIS SOLANO DID AND SUFFERED IN THE INFIRMARY OF THE CONVENT OF LIMA.

It is usual with the Saints to suffer much in old age because of the austerities they have put in practice, in order to subject the flesh to the spirit. Yes, arriving at their term, they seem, as it were, worn out and fatigued, sighing after and in want of the repose which awaits them. So it was with S. Solano; for during his last years his continual illnesses obliged them to give him a chamber in the infirmary of his convent at Lima. Still his love of suffering surpassing his strength, he continued his rigours: though the physicians would not venture to bleed him, because of his weakness, he took the discipline even to blood. He was prescribed good nourishment, and he could scarcely be prevailed on to eat a whole egg or a morsel of well-dressed meat. Even in the burning heat of fever, the approbation of his confessor was necessary to induce him to take a little water to cool his parched tongue.

As he ate very little, he slept but little; often

during the night was he discovered going on his bare knees round the cloisters of his monastery, shedding abundance of tears. In the day-time he regularly paid two visits to the other invalids, supplying their wants, making their beds, and rendering them the most painful and humiliating services. His fervour was so great that it left him no repose; for although weakness often obliged him to keep his bed, still he was used to be seized with such transports, that, unable to restrain himself, he got up, passed quickly from the infirmary to the cloister, and then to the different parts of the convent, pronouncing meantime words of devotion with such tenderness, as to inflame the hearts of those religious who had the good fortune to come in his way.

One day his physician coming to visit him in presence of some of the religious, and the conversation having turned upon the love of God, the sick saint felt so transported, that getting up hastily he left the chamber. The physician felt surprised and even annoyed at this action; but the good fathers appeased him, by saying that they were often obliged to abstain from speaking of God in the presence of F. Francis, because of the pious transports which seized him upon such occasions, and which always injured him corporally. Having then gone in quest of him, they found him in the act of embracing a crucifix, but so weakened and powerless that it was necessary to carry him back to the infirmary.

About a year before his decease an earthquake took place during the night, which terrified every

one so much, that on the following day the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in all the churches. As the shocks were renewed while the people knelt in crowds in the Franciscan church, all took to flight, religious as well as seculars; but S. Solano, who was there too, rising up obliged them to stay, and then spoke to them so movingly on the enormity of sin, the rigour of God's judgments, and the necessity of preparing for them, that sighs and sobs were heard on all sides, the religious weeping and lamenting as bitterly as the vilest sinner in the assembly. Thus the man of God, standing like another Aaron in the midst of those dead in sin, but who began to live to grace, effected their reconcilation with the Divine Majesty.

This was one of the last of the remarkable sermons of S. Solano, but it was the one best remembered; for the religious testified long after that they were never so sensibly touched as upon that occasion. They said that the Saint's countenance became then so inflamed with zeal, that he no longer appeared sick; that his words were like burning arrows, penetrating all hearts; that it seemed as if the Holy Ghost had on that day chosen him to be the trumpet of penance; that he had changed the servile dread caused by the earthquake, into a filial fear and sincere contrition; and, finally, that no one could remember that day without being sensibly affected.

Some time after this event, knowing that in consequence of his inability to preach, his books were no longer necessary to him, the Saint

brought them to the F. Guardian, entreating that they might be distributed among the community. To please him it was so done, at which the religious were right glad, every one of them being desirous to have something hitherto in the use of this great servant of God.

As God purifies His elect to the very end, He ordained or permitted that some of the religious should try the patience of S. Solano. It happened in this manner. A prudent and clever religious, who was sick in the same infirmary, seeing him one day enter, asked him in a choleric tone where he was going, adding that he need not expect to deceive him like others; that simple persons thought him a good man, but that he reckoned him a man of little sense, and less virtue. These words, which would have vexed a hypocrite, rejoiced our Saint; so acknowledging that they were all true, he modestly retired. Another religious once came and said to him nearly the same words, adding that his manner of acting proceeded from intolerable pride, and a desire of being esteemed by all; to which S. Francis replied only by prostrating, kissing his feet, asking his pardon, thanking him for his good advice, and praying him to supplicate the Divine mercy on his behalf.

He was quite used to suffer joyfully what provokes others to anger. A religious, much younger than himself, one day said, on seeing him long at prayer, that he would do better to catechise the negroes and sailors on board the vessels: the Saint proceeded at once to perform that duty,

whereat the religious was so much confused, that on the next day he went to make his apology.

In sickness he was never heard to complain. Whether attended or forsaken, in heat or cold, with remedies or left to nature, he remained perfectly satisfied. His will was at all times quite conformable to that of God, and he had frequently in his lips the holy words, "God be praised. God be glorified in all things."

CHAPTER XVII.

LAST ILLNESS AND SAINTLY DEATH OF THE BLESSED FRANCIS SOLANO.

After so many pains and labours, the time at length arrived when God was to reward his servant and to crown His gifts. He manifested to him his approaching death. His infirmities vastly increased for two months previous to that happy event; for, besides several other sufferings, he was taken with a violent fever, which continued until his dissolution. But as he loved nothing better than suffering, which assimilated him to the Lord Jesus, he no longer lived but by the life of Jesus, and considered with S. Paul death less as an evil than a gain. He blessed God for his pains and dolours, by which he said he chastised his enemy, meaning his body, to which he was accustomed to make taunts and reproaches.

Though so much broken down and exhausted,

it was wonderful to see how tranquilly he possessed his spirit; night and day was he occupied in the contemplation of heavenly things, nor would he permit other discourse than of God. The joys of a future life formed his interior entertainment, for which end he had the devout meditations of F. Lewis of Granada read to him, and made suitable reflections upon each passage for the space of a quarter of an hour, accompanying them with tears and pious ejaculations from the Psalms; as, "O my soul, bless the Lord! I will bless the Lord during my life. O my soul, bless the Lord."

One time he besought his companion to help him to praise God; then suddenly raising his voice he said, "O my God, thou art my Creator! my King! my Father! my Sweetness! my All!" and became so enraptured, that he looked immoveable as a statue. A transport of devotion, wherewith he was seized on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, produced a contrary effect; for then, quite out of himself with the love of God, he left his bed and ran about the adjoining rooms exclaiming, "Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost!"

On the night of Corpus Christi, his companion, having visited him, found him quite overjoyed, repeating several times the words of the Invitatory, "Come, let us adore the Lord, let us prostrate ourselves before Him." Wishing to know how he felt, he made his inquiries, but the Saint continuing to demonstrate excessive joy, besought him to retire, which he did instantly.

As the illness increased, it was proposed to him, fifteen days before his death, to receive the Holy Viaticum, to which he replied, "It is time, it is time to receive so good a Guest as our Lord Jesus Christ. Receive Him, my soul, let Him come at once." His Divine Lord was brought to him, and he received Him in a manner that gave public edification. It being then said to him, that he might live to gain the Indulgence of Portiuncula, which occurs on the 2nd of August, he answered, "I hope to gain that of my beloved Father S. Bonaventure, which occurs on the 14th of July." Connecting this with what he subsequently said, that he would not pass the Feast of S. Bonaventure, it is presumed that he was aware of the time of his last passage.

The religious, perceiving him daily approach his end, bewailed his loss; while he went on rejoicing at the prospect of future glory, manifesting to the end tranquillity of soul, interior peace, and an exterior joy, which could be nothing less than a gift of the Divine Spirit, and a foretaste of heaven. Some days before his decease, in imitation of S. Francis, he had read to him the Passion of our Lord according to S. John; and uniting his pains to those of his crucified Saviour, whose image was before him, he said, "O faithful Friend, O true Father! be You blessed, be You infinitely glorified, for having, solely through charity, suffered death upon the cross for such a miserable wretch as me." During the most affecting parts of the sad recital he sometimes remained, as it were, insensible, or he shed torrents of tears.

On the 12th of July he received Extreme Unction, for which he gratefully blessed God; then turning to the Father Guardian, he begged that he might be allowed to die naked on the bare ground, and that after his death they would give him for interment the poorest habit in the community, by way of alms. At this the religious redoubled their tears, but their grief considerably increased when the Saint himself wept bitterly, and asked pardon for his evil example. This action was followed by mutual requests and promises to be remembered after death; the rest of the day was spent in ejaculations which indicated his ardent desire of possessing his sovereign good. The following incident is somewhat remarkable; the religious and physicians were quite astonished at it. A few hours before his death the fever left him; his countenance of brown became white as snow, his face and hands plump and fleshy from being worn and emaciated, and his breath, disagreeable during his illness, sweet and pleasing.

He passed the night preceding his death in an ecstasy so profound, that many thought he had expired; but he returned to himself, saying with the Psalmist, "I rejoiced at the things which were said unto me, We shall go into the house of the Lord." At last his hour came. The religious who assisted him then recited the canonical hours, during which, every time they said the Gloria Patri, the holy man raised his eyes and hands to heaven; afterwards, in compliance with his desire, they chaunted some Psalms, and commenced the Creed at his particular request; and

just as they were pronouncing the words, "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine," and the elevation bell of the high mass, then celebrating, tolled at that same moment in their ear, proclaiming that the adorable Incarnate Word again renewed the ineffable mystery of His love; our Saint immediately crossing his hands, and fixing his eyes on the crucifix, pronounced the holy words he was so often in the habit of uttering, "God be praised!" and gave up his soul to God, it being then eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Wednesday, 14th July, the feast of S. Bonaventure, in the year of our redemption 1610.

Convinced by many proofs of the sanctity of this true servant of God, the religious prostrated themselves, and casting themselves upon his sacred corpse, kissed his hands and feet; those who knew him published what his humility had hitherto obliged them to conceal, and all agreed in saying that to F. Sólano nothing was wanting to make him a saint but the process of canonization. A flock of little birds, which during the preceding eight days had come to sing at his window every morning about four o'clock, just then renewed their sweet warbling, which was the more remarkable as it was then mid-winter in Lima.

On the following night, about eleven o'clock, the poor Clares descried from their convent a pillar of fire, which, after resting some time over the infirmary at S. Francis, seemed to rise up even twelve times successively, and fall upon their monastery, as was attested by many of

those nuns in the verbal process for the canonization of our S. Solano. O how blessed is the death of the saints! O how truly desirable!

CHAPTER XVIII.

BURIAL OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

The news of the happy passage of the man of God being diffused through the city of Lima, such a concourse of her sons, of all conditions, crowded to the convent, that the religious were obliged to close the doors of the infirmary. Some kissed his feet, others touched them with their beads or rosaries, more cut out pieces of his tunic, so that it had to be renewed four times during that day. On the next day the archbishop, accompanied by his chapter, went to the convent with the viceroy of Peru, then the Marquis de Montes Claros; and the religious of the different orders proceeded in a body, to render their profound respect to the servant of God.

F. Venido, the commissary general of the Franciscans in Peru, having celebrated the Divine Sacrifice, F. John Sebastian, provincial of the Society of Jesus, delivered a most edifying panegyric on the Saint. The musicians of the cathedral chaunted the service, and all was performed in so august a style, that more could not have been done for the viceroy himself.

The following account of this event, so glorious to religion, and so encouraging to all true ser-

vants of God, was given by F. Alvarez de Paz, of the Society of Jesus, in the 2nd vol. of his Spiritual Works, in treating on Holy Poverty:—

"In this present month of July, 1610, God abundantly recompensed Holy Poverty in this city of Lima. On the feast of S. Bonaventure, the Convent of Friars honours a deceased religious named Francis Solano, priest, a native of Montillo in Andalusia. This man was remarkable for his sanctity, and a worthy son of the seraphic S. Francis. For forty years and over he professed the religious life, and this with great fervour, walking diligently in the ways of the Spirit. He was exceedingly humble, he fled from dignities and offices; was most patient, meek, obedient, pure beyond all description; inflamed with paternal charity, often visiting the sick, and occupying himself in other good works. He was devoured with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and his sermons, which, according to the world's notions, were neither adorned nor eloquent, converted numbers from sin, and powerfully induced them to practise virtue. He loved solitude; and if the Divine honour did not require the contrary, he could have almost buried himself alive. Alone with God, he was quite occupied in the contemplation of heavenly things, in which he was favoured with frequent raptures and ecstasies. These consolations, to which he was accustomed, caused him to pass nights without sleep on the altar step; there he chaunted psalms to the most holy Sacrament, and played on the harp to the

honour of Him for whom the twenty-four elders in the beatific vision of Him tune their lyres, tasting ineffable bliss. No wonder that, possessing these true riches, he for the love of Jesus Christ so passionately loved poverty. So enraptured was he with this virtue, that satisfied with a habit and a poor tunic, he scarcely took what was necessary to support his weak and infirm body. He was the enemy, or rather the true friend of his flesh, for he preferred, by chastening it by vigils and fastings, to preserve it to eternal life, rather than to endanger it by ease and indulgence. Indeed, his whole life was but one most holy and meritorious action, or a most fervent and unceasing prayer, filled with the lights and consolations of heaven.

"On the day of his interment, so great was the concourse assembled for the celebration of the obsequies, that never have I witnessed anything like to it in this kingdom. Rich and poor flocked to the church; and the uninvited too, for who could think of bidding a whole city to the funeral of a poor religious? for all were anxious to see and venerate the "Saint." The religious also came there from the several monasteries, not in a limited number of six or eight, as was customary, but in crowds almost; God, I believe, so ordaining, not only that the services might be more respectably performed, but in order that several might be more incited to perfection, as eventually happened. I went there too, and arrived just as they were bearing the venerable remains to the church. I acknowledged to a

religious of the order, who could scarcely get through the crowd, my amazement at what I witnessed; persons of no less distinction than the archbishop of the city and the viceroy of Peru were the first bearers of the poor bier, assisted by the superiors of the regular orders, and the other persons most considerable for learning and dignity. Though very unworthy, I joined them, strongly reminded of the words of holy David, 'Thy friends, O God, are exceedingly honourable;' and again, those others of holy writ, 'Thus should he be honoured whom the king wishes to honour.'

"After having with much difficulty reached the church, and laid down the bier in the place appropriated for it, we began to look upon that body so poorly clothed, which had been the abode of so holy a soul. I devoutly kissed the hands and feet, which I found flexible and moderately warm, so that it seemed to me I touched not a corpse, but the body of a man sleeping. Assembled in great numbers about it, we felt more inclined to rejoice than to be sad, and were by no means disposed to pray for him, but rather to glorify God in His Saints, feeling that F. Solano had now entered into his rest. There was nothing of that unpleasant odour emitted by corpses, nor was there any symptom of decay; but it seemed as if the venerable remains inspired admirable tranquillity and peace into the hearts of all. The viceroy had his cushion, made of silk and gold, placed under the head of the saintly deceased, and caused the sack which had served him for a pillow, to be placed upon his

chair of state during the whole office, judging that he thus made a better use of his royal dignity. In using his cushion he would have acted only as viceroy of a mortal prince; but in honouring the wretched sack he honoured Jesus Christ in His poor servant, and appeared most Christian and most devout.

"The office, mass, and funeral oration being finished, we proceeded to bear the corpse to the place of burial, which was prepared under the steps of the high altar; but we could scarcely get near it for the vast assemblage pressing on all sides, to venerate the deceased, or touch him with their chaplets, and other things. By the assistance of the guards of the viceroy we at length succeeded, and the interment was completed a little after mid-day.

"On the following night his excellency had the blessed corpse exhumed, to have the portrait taken, when the limner, as he told me, found it still flexible, as if the father were in a slumber; a most pleasing odour too was inhaled at the same time. We piously believe that his soul enjoys great glory now with God, and hope that time, which effaces all things, will never erase the memory of his virtues from the minds of men."

So far father Alvarez de Paz.

CHAPTER XIX.

MIRACLES AND PREDICTIONS OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

The miraculous effects of the omnipotence, wisdom, and love of God communicated to men, are the most convincing proofs of their sanctity. It is upon these testimonies that the Church principally founds her decrees authorizing their public devotion.

We have already related how our Saint learned the Indian language in a comparatively short time; but we have here to add, that no sooner had he arrived in the vast regions of la Plata, than preaching publicly in Spanish, God recompensed his zeal by causing him to be understood by all the people, and so much to their wonder and amazement, that they at once received his doctrine, seeing most plainly that it emanated from the God of truth.

The Saint was equally successful when speaking to them individually. One day, seeing an Indian in his agony, he commanded him to tell him his last desires, and this in his own language. The dying savage understood him, and declared in his mother tongue that he wished to be instructed in the Christian doctrine, and to receive baptism. The principal articles of our holy faith were at once communicated to him, and next baptism, and immediately after the happy man resigned his soul in peace. This miracle was, so to speak, reciprocal, the Saint not knowing the Indian language nor the Indian our Spanish.

Another converted Indian came to ask the Saint to bury his dead son; the holy man went at once to his cabin, and finding the son perfectly well, reproached the parents with mocking him. In apology they maintained that he really was dead when they sent; and S. Francis, offering no further remark, the assistants published in all places that the young Indian had been resuscitated by him.

In journeying through the vast provinces of India to extend the kingdom of Christ, our Saint came one day to the bank of a river, as deep as it was rapid; and having no means to cross, he raised his eyes to heaven, then extending his cloak upon the waters, supported by faith, he passed over in the sight and to the great astonishment of the Indian spectators.

A shower of locusts having alighted on a field of wheat, the Saint, called upon to banish them, recited the prayers in the Ritual, and then sprinkling the place with holy water, commanded the locusts to retire to the neighbouring mountains, where the infidel inhabitants eat this sort of insect. The command was instantly obeyed.

The Saint predicted to a young man that he would one day be a Jesuit; the event verified the prediction; he did enter the holy Society of Jesus, and ever preserved great veneration and respect for God's holy servant. On one occasion he came to recommend his sick father to the Saint's prayers. Knowing his design by revelation, the holy man anticipated him, by say-

ing gaily, "Your father is very sick, but not unto death," and so it turned out.

A religious of the Order of Mercy having gone to solicit S. Solano in behalf of his vicar general, then at the point of death, he anticipated him in like manner; for going to meet him, he said, "Tell the father vicar he will soon be able to leave his bed." Many other things did he predict to the same religious, all of which being verified by the event, he clearly knew that S. Francis Solano possessed the gift of prophecy.

Mary d' Ortega, having a son who wished to become an Augustinian against her will, came for consolation to S. Solano. He assured her that her son would indeed be a religious, but not of the order of S. Augustine. Reassured by this she went home, when she found her child determined on taking the habit of S. Francis. He eventually did so, under the name of Brother Luke Sancius.

Doctor J. Velasquez, archdeacon of Lima, being grievously ill, was restored to health by our Saint laying his hands upon him and reciting a gospel; and by similar means was effected the cure of Miche de Bellila, though so ill that the physicians thought he had not four hours to live.

Ecstasies cannot be described, even by those who experience them. Reason, almost blind in these miraculous transports, pretends to believe that they arise from so great an attachment of the mind in considering an object infinitely beautiful, and of the will in loving it, that the animal spirits, quite absorbed in this contem-

plation and love, cease to act upon the organs of our senses, and leave them in a state of inaction, which causes the body to become immoveable. But when the spirit is quite led by the imagination, it is filled with the beloved object, and the desire to unite itself to it; then there ensues an extraordinary transport, which elevates the body as well as the soul, and causes it to run, as it were, to the enrapturing object, which in these moments communicates itself supernaturally. These sorts of ecstasies frequently happened to our Saint, as has been already mentioned. When these wonderful favours are accompanied by profound humility, it cannot be doubted that they are great marks of perfect sanctity. It was so with S. Solano. Returning to himself he said to the eye-witnesses, that he was unworthy that the earth should support him, or that God should bear with him.

CHAPTER XX.

MIRACLES WROUGHT AT THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

On the day our Saint died, all the sick monks in the infirmary of the great convent of Lima were cured of their different maladies. Two fathers who were ailing, but not in the infirmary, became well too; the one by kissing the hands, and the other by touching the blessed re-

mains. All who implored the intercession of the Saint, whether by simple prayer, or kissing his feet or hands, or applying something to the afflicted part which had touched his body, were relieved from their infirmities.

Christopher Vivas and Anne of Prado were thus cured of asthma; three others were relieved from fever; a young girl's paralysed arm was restored; and a man who had a tumour in the stomach was completely cured.

Mary Guttierz, afflicted with the evil, was made whole by applying to her neck some scraps which she had cut from the Saint's tunic; but denying the miracle through criminal shame, when questioned by the apostolical judges, her malady returned. Obliged to recur once more to the holy Saint, she did so, promising, if heard, to disclose both favours; she was graciously listened to, and deposed to the foregoing fact, as well as a friend, who alone knew of her repeated infirmity and recovery.

Those who despised the relics of the Saint were punished by God as much as those who revered him were rewarded. Behold an example: Michael Gomez mocked those who went to visit the Saint's remains, and showed his contempt for them; but on the following night he became greatly disquieted, so that he was, as it were, obliged to go and kiss his blessed feet, but doing it unwillingly, he derived no relief; and returning to bed, the venerable figure of the Saint appeared before him, saying, "Why, being but dust and ashes thyself, hast thou disgust for

my feet? beware lest some evil happen to thee." The following day he lost the use of his limbs, and his mouth became crooked. Recognizing the Divine wrath, Michael avowed his fault most penitently, and having procured the relics of the Saint, and touching them with due respect, he was at once partially cured, and finally fully delivered from his malady.

Seven other persons, four of them religious of various orders, were cured of their several infirmities by recurring to the Saint. Two days after his death a young girl was resuscitated as soon as the cowl of S. Solano was laid upon her corpse.

F. Lewis of Guadaloupe, a Dominican, who had almost lost his sight, applied his eyes to a chaplet which had touched our Saint's relics; but feeling no relief he prayed thus: "O Father Francis Solano, if you desire to convince me of your sanctity, published by all, obtain my cure." Instant restoration of his sight followed this petition.

A slave of Mary de Salas had his sight restored by clay taken from the sepulchre, spread upon his eyes after being moistened with water. Catherine de Virgo was cured of a like malady by a fragment of his tunic being laid upon her eyes.

Another priest was cured of an ulcer by rubbing it with the oil of a lamp lighted before the blessed corpse of S. Solano. Many other details of miracles are omitted, thirty other persons being cured most miraculously on the days of his death and burial.

CHAPTER XXI.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE VIRTUES AND MIRACLES OF S. FRANCIS SOLANO.

The Franciscan Fathers of the province of Lima having charged one of their religious to collect the wonders attending the life and death of their saintly brother, the magistrates of the city deputed a procurator to assist him, while as yet the witnesses retained a clear remembrance of the facts. By the exertions of these men, three hundred and four witnesses, some of whom were very distinguished, as the Marquis of Monte Claros, and five provincials of religious orders, gave evidence in the cause before the archbishop of Lima and his suffragans. Similar proceedings took place before the prelates of Seville, Granada, Cordova, and Malaga, in which dioceses S. Solano abode before passing to the Indies. Ten years were employed in this, after which the general of the order laid them before his Holiness Urban VIII., who by a decree, dated February 1st, 1625, permitted that the special informations should be proceeded with.

The death of the archbishop of Lima retarded the execution of the pontifical order for three years; but, to the great joy of the inhabitants, the magistrates of Lima published by sound of trumpet on the day it was received, that they should

illuminate their windows on that night, and attend at the cathedral next morning to hear the apostolical rescript promulged. Fire-works and ringing of bells and music testified the people's delight on the joyous occasion, and on the next morning the dean of the cathedral, the see being still vacant, having received from the commissary of the Franciscans in the New World the decree of the Pope, kissed it, placed it on his head in token of respect; and proceeding to the church with all the ecclesiastical bodies in procession, at the offertory of the mass of the Holy Ghost, which the dean himself celebrated, the decree was read, and the order of the apostolical commissaries for all to come and reveal what they knew of the virtues and miracles of Father Solano. The mass was then finished, and the Te Deum solemnly chaunted. We will not attempt to describe the rich decorations and triumphal arches provided by the people on the occasion; suffice it to say, that the Spaniards, who then filled Lima, are most magnificent in all that concerns religion.

Deeming the beatification of F. Francis most certain, the ocular witnesses of his virtues and miracles met and unanimously selected him as the Protector of Lima. Several other cities followed this example, as Salinas, Panama, Carthagena, Cusco, Potozi, De la Plata, and others. The captains of the Spanish fleet, sailing homeward from Peru, laden with vast treasure, did the same in consequence of the following incident. Being alarmed on the voyage, the general of the gal-

leons, Don Bernardine de Mendoza, prayed the religious who bore the informations in the cause of S. Solano to Rome, to unfold the portrait which he had with him, that all on board might invoke the Saint's intercession. It was so done; the picture was fastened to the mast, and at once a favourable wind arose, which continued for several days. A calm ensuing a second and a third time, the crew as often recurred to the holy man, and with the same success, so that they happily reached Panama, and the general, with the consent of all the officers, chose him, S. Francis, for patron of the Spanish fleets in those seas. On landing, they celebrated a feast by way of thanksgiving, with a procession and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, high mass, and a sermon recounting the favour, and from that time the viceroy of Peru never suffered the fleet to sail for Spain without his visiting the tomb of S. Solano, and placing it under his protection. To obtain the same favour for his family, he dedicated to him his eldest son, aged ten years, and led him to make a visit to the holy man's sepulchre, when the boy first crossed the precincts of the palace. The people of Panama became so devout on this occasion to F. Francis, that for a whole month the cathedral remained open in consequence of the number of sick carried there from all parts, many of whom returned home healed through his intercession.

Omitting an almost infinite number of miracles wrought by the Lord by means of His servant, during the process for his beatification, I shall

mention but the following:—On the 8th November, 1639, Mary of Monroi, aged five years, being killed and her body greatly crushed by a fall from a very high window, her mother, while some were endeavouring to console her for the sad accident, chanced to cast her eyes on a picture of St. Solano, which was before her bed; and conceiving a hope that he would assist her, she anointed the face of her dead child with some of the oil from the lamps which burned before the sepulchre of the venerable man, when the little girl arose, and waking from the sleep of death sound and whole, pronounced the words, "Jesus, be with me."

CHAPTER XXII.

DELAY OF THE BEATIFICATION.

It was with a zeal and ardour quite incredible that all the towns and cities in the New World longed for the beatification of F. Solano, believing it equally nigh as certain. Meantime they increased their devotion to him, and heaven seemed to give it its sanction by continual miracles. An entire volume would be required to detail these, so that some of the Indians believing they could not too strongly express their gratitude to their benefactor, offered lamps at his tomb, which were kept lighted day and night; others attached to it tablets or pictures representing the favours received; while more made pilgrimages to it.

The body of the servant of God being transferred from its primitive coffin, or encasement, to a shrine of cedar wood, the Lady of Don George Manrique de Lara, Knight of the Order of St. James, penetrated with gratitude for favours received during the life-time of the Father, caused a magnificent chapel to be built in the Franciscan church of Lima richly ornamented, and furnished with three niches, the centre one of which was destined for the precious remains, together with a shrine splendidly adorned as soon as the bull of the beatification should be received.

But about this time Urban VIII., by a brief of the 5th of July, 1634, forbade all further proceedings in the cause of the servants of God, whose beatification was then solicited from the holy see, until all the lamps and other marks of the popular devotion were removed from their sepulchres. This brief originated in a desire to rectify the conduct of the people, who are by no means authorized to offer public devotion to any one, however saintly and holy. The Indians could not believe that this rescript at all concerned F. Solano, so persuaded were they of his sanctity, as his virtues and miracles had been reported to them, and moreover that they were every day receiving new favours; so the Francisans were not able to stop the course of their piety. Twenty years elapsed before the Indians would listen to reason, but they were finally obliged to obey the holy see; and to keep them to it, the sacred body was taken from before their eyes,

and deposited in the chapel of the Infirmary without any mark of distinction in the year 1656, and all the lamps were laid up in the sacristy, until the pontifical decree authorizing their use should be granted.

Matters remained thus until the year 1664, when the proceedings were resumed. Finally, in 1674, on the 25th September, Clement X., after all the numerous preliminaries, issued a brief, purporting that F. Francis de Solano was proved after due examination to have possessed in an heroic degree all the moral and theological virtues; and declared that miracles had been wrought by his intercession, particularly two, the cure of Didacus de Savedra of an inveterate ulcer, and of John Viafara, who, being at the point of death from a pulmonic disease, declared that it was certain that this servant of God deserved to be canonized. It was decreed, that it was most secure to declare him blessed, and to permit to his order, and in his birth-place, the recital of his office, with the mass of a confessor; but that meantime this should be solicited of God by prayers and sacrifices, as tending to the consolation of the faithful and the honour of the holy Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF ST. F. SOLANO.

After public prayers and sacrifices for the space of five months, to obtain light from on high,

his Holiness Clement X., by a solemn bull, dated 24th January, 1675, that the venerable servant of God, Francis Solano, should be called Blessed, that his relics should be exposed and venerated, and his pictures ornamented with rays of glory, and that his office and mass should be celebrated as aforesaid.

Great was the joy of the Indians, we may well suppose, on this occasion, and anxious were they to transfer the blessed body to the place prepared for it. They now indemnified themselves for the delay of their hopes by signal marks of piety and magnificence.

To increase their delight, their holy patron was solemnly canonized by Benedict XIII., on the 27th December, 1726. May he intercede for us with the most Holy Trinity, to whom be glory for ever!

THE END.

RICHARDSON AND SON, DERBY.